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THE COMMANDMENTS

CONSIDERED AS INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL
REFORMATION.



THE
COMMANDMENTS

CONSIDERED AS INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL
REFORMATION.

BY

F. D. MAURICE,

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little work was written before I had any expectation of the honour which the University of Cambridge has done me, in appointing me to its Chair of Moral Philosophy ; before I had even a dream of seeking for that honour. It is simply a book of practical morality and divinity, and has not the least of a scientific character. But I am not sorry that it should go forth as a witness that I desire, in whatever task I am engaged, to keep the interests of practical morality and divinity in sight, as paramount to all others.

LONDON, *October*, 1866.

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DEDICATION.

THE REV. NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D.

GLASGOW.

MY DEAR SIR,—

MANY months ago you did me the honour to send me a copy of your speech on the Sabbath, which has now become celebrated in England as well as Scotland. I admired the eloquence and manliness of that speech, as much, I think, as any one could have done who sympathised with all the sentiments of it. I did sympathise with many of them. So far as it was a protest against opinions and practices which religious teachers in your country or ours have grafted upon the Fourth Commandment, it seemed to me as useful as it was honest and courageous.

But the more I have reflected on your arguments, the less have I been able to accept your doctrine respecting that Commandment, or respecting the Commandments generally. Coming from the lips of an eminent preacher in the Kirk of Scotland, those arguments were entitled to the gravest consideration. Apart from their intrinsic ability, they indicated a movement in the country most remarkable for Sabbatical strictness, which portend great changes there, and which may affect all lands. I have weighed them with all the prepossession in their favour which arises from dislike to Presbyteral as well as to Prelatical assumptions, from respect for those who maintain an unpopular opinion; and I have come deliberately to the conviction that the Commandments are now, and ever have been, the great protectors against Presbyteral and Prelatical assumptions, and that if we do not receive them as Commandments of the Lord God spoken to Israel, and spoken to every

people under heaven now, we lose the greatest witnesses we possess for the national morality and the civil freedom which these assumptions are undermining.

Your speech has been continually in my mind whilst I have been writing this book; but I have not alluded to it, or attempted an answer to any part of it. I was led to speak on the subject by some remarks which I heard from a very able and excellent clergyman of the English Church, in condemnation of our practice of reading the Commandments in our Communion Service. No Presbytery will blame any one for complaining of such a practice, or will applaud any one for defending it. I have that security, and many others, that if I have the misfortune to dissent from you, I shall not win any favour from your adversaries. I hope I have said nothing which can induce any one who thinks ill of you to speak well of me.

But, though the occasion of these pages

was the one to which I have referred, they are not chiefly occupied with reflections on the reasonableness or unreasonableness of passages in our Liturgy, or of the opinions which are maintained by those who dislike Liturgies. It is possible, I know, for divines to become so wrapped up in such questions as to forget all which is passing around them in their own land and in other lands. To me this indifference has presented itself as a great sin, which I must confess before God. What, I have said to myself, is my theology good for, when I can behold with so little of anxious hope and fear Italy rising out of its chrysalis and bursting into a new life—new, but restoring to it the days of old; Germany, by strange processes, passing from a collection of little principalities, each with its castes of soldiers, artists, professors, into a living and united nation; when I can look with so little of shame and amazement on the spectacle which England is presenting to the world of citizens

who offer their consciences to the highest bidder, and rich men who buy the right to legislate, or to make their sons legislators, at that price ?

And while I am saying for myself and my brethren who call themselves ministers of God, “Oh that we were more like those old prophets who never separated their well-being for a moment from the well-being of their nation, who felt its sins and miseries as their own, who learnt through it the purpose of God, to educate and bless all nations !”—while I am saying this, I am met with the cry, “We are *so* Judaical; our great effort should be to throw off our Semitic associations, and to show that we belong to the modern Aryan world.” Why, that is the very thing we have been doing so diligently for a number of years. That is what all our different schools under one pretence or another *are* doing. Our Catholic school cannot bear the secularity of the Nation; it interferes with the rights and

privileges of the Church. Our Evangelicals affirm that it is very well to have establishments for promoting religion, but that religion itself is altogether an individual thing and has nothing to do with the Nation. Our Liberals echo the maxim, though some of their inferences from it are of the most opposite kind. The Old Testament, they say, is a national history, and therefore only concerns us so far as we are able to extract some religious sentiments out of it. Thus, when any of us venture to express an interest in the movements of the Continent, we must either link them to some special scheme of prophetic interpretation, or else apologize for our earnestness by saying that we cannot quite cease to be men *though* we are Christians and preachers of the Gospel. If we express, timidly and reservedly, our opinion that bribery and corruption are objectionable (especially when brought to light), we qualify that opinion by saying that we speak as politicians. There are sins which it be-

hoves us to denounce professionally ; which we are to regard as hateful in the sight of God : but *these* are of a different order, these only bring nations to ruin, these only indicate that we have sold ourselves to money, and worship that as the supreme Lord ; why should theologians trouble themselves about these ?

In the late American war, we did hear ever and anon words of a very Judaical character,—words which reminded one of old Puritan and Covenanting times. They mingled strangely and incongruously with the loud boasts of the American newspapers, which indicated the highest development of a purely “Aryan” civilization. They were received with much derision by the newspapers which represent the Aryan civilization of England. But, I do not think that He who sitteth in the heavens, and, as old Jewish writers speak, laughs at many of the plots of kings and peoples, held those cries to Him in derision. I think the prayer that He would come forth and defend the

right, and put strength into the weakest who were struggling for it, being first inspired by Him, brought an answer from Him; that the courage was bestowed, that noble lives and noble deaths proved that He is the same now as in the generations of old. I am not afraid to use this language, however much it may be open to the charge of cant—or, since that is a favourite variation of the phrase, of profaneness,—from our popular writers; because you as the successor of those who believed in a God of nations will understand it; because you will confess that the worst cant of our days comes from those who wish by all means to uphold a Religion, and have no faith in a God who upholds justice and truth.

It is the certainty that you are in your heart a genuine representative of these forefathers,—that you are doing manfully the work which they would most rejoice in,—that if you depart in any degree from their maxims and practices it is only because you would enforce

and expand their principles,—which emboldens me to implore that you will reconsider your theory about the Commandments. I have no theory to substitute for it. I have no desire that you should accept any doctrines which bear an Anglican stamp. I believe that the reverence for an unchangeable Law and a living Lawgiver has given to the Scotch character its strength and solidity; whatever any of us may discover in it of hardness and narrowness, has proceeded, I think, not from the excess of that reverence, but from the loss of it through the substitution of glosses, opinions, traditions for the divine Commandments—through the attempt to fulfil them by artificial rules of men's devising, which obscure the divine fulfilment of them. To part with the Commandments is, it seems to me, to put yourself out of harmony with the best habits and the deepest convictions of your people, and to lessen your power of reforming what is feeble and false in them.

And what I say of Scotland, I would say also of England, and of every nation under heaven. Those who think that God has left the nations to the care of diplomatists or journalists believe that it is very desirable for us to have a Christianity. They wish us to have it in any form we like. It may even take the form of the Sermon on the Mount, provided only there is none of whom the people who hear the sermon shall say, "He speaketh as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." The Scribes, of one sort or another, must make the Christianity. And so there will be a Christianity for Rome, fashioned by the Cardinals; a Christianity for Paris, fashioned by the *salons*; a Christianity for London, fashioned by the Stock Exchange. It will be stationary and dead in the hands of Conservatives; entirely fluctional when managed by the men of Progress. It will be for a long time harmless, and chiefly ornamental; bearing witness against no oppression, threatening

no abuse : then it will suddenly assume the form of a fierce fanaticism, mingling with the dissonant cries of hungry and savage men. It will be, for a while, almost entirely materialistic ; then it will combine itself with all the dreams of an unseen world, which can never be extinct in the breasts of any human beings. As the religion of prosperous men, it will be a Christianity, with a dead Christ to give it its name. As the religion of suffering men, it will be a Christianity, with an incendiary leader making himself the Christ. As a religion for Materialists, it will try to galvanize ethical maxims and opinions till they look like powers. As a religion for Spiritualists, it will recognise all spirits, except the Holy Spirit. In one and all its forms, it will be only a human conception, leading naturally to the doctrine that the Christ never has been, never can be anything else ; thence, for those who still want a religion, to the worship, theoretically, of humanity itself, practically, of any specimen

of humanity for which the worshippers may have a fancy.

Such visions as these, to which no one who contemplates the present state of the world, religious or irreligious, Catholic or Protestant, can close his eyes, answer an objection which many will make to what I have said in this volume about national faith. "You are taking us back," it will be said, "to an older period in the world's history. At the Reformation, men were busy about national distinctions in connexion with faith. Now all admit that we must have a Catholic faith, whatever sense they may give to that phrase." I demand a Catholic faith, not in any new sense, but in the old sense; that old sense satisfying, as I maintain, all the newest demands of the conscience and reason of man. A Father in heaven must be the root of it—a Father of all mankind in the Son of His Love—a Father who bestows His Spirit upon His children, that they may serve Him truly and freely:

here is the Catholic faith which we have been taught in the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Modern Papal Catholicism, modern Liberal Catholicism, assume another basis. The Church, not God, is the ground of the one; humanity, not God, is the ground of the other. These opinions must combine at last; one must be absorbed into the other. The Jewish Commandments are the abiding witness against both. I admit that there is a cry for a Catholic faith and Catholic unity now which there was not in the sixteenth century. Just because I recognise the cry as the most genuine one of our century, I turn to these Commandments with the same affection as our fathers felt for them then—if possible, with a greater affection. The struggle for Catholicity will be a delusive and mischievous struggle, if it is severed from the struggle for national freedom and order. To connect it with that is to establish in the most living and practical sense, the union of Gospel with Law.

I must add one word on a subject upon which I am very little qualified to speak, but to which no one in these days can be indifferent, however careless he may be about the order or freedom of Nations. You feel, I am sure, how mad and godless are the efforts of Christian preachers or laymen to put any check upon the freest physical investigations, or in any way whatever to determine the direction which they shall take. Such efforts, like all other things which are weak and wrong in our divinity, are attributed to its "Judaical" element; if that can be cleared away, we shall have no religious obstacle, it is said, in the way of scientific progress. That is to say, if we cease to believe in fixed and permanent laws governing the moral world, we shall at once spring to the conviction that there must be fixed and permanent laws in the natural world, and that it is worth while to devote our energies to the search for them. "Stop!" some logician will say, "you are

taking the word 'law' in two different senses. You are confounding, as Hooker and Montesquieu confounded, the laws which depend for their validity on rewards and punishments, with the laws which are generalizations from phenomena." I reply, "It is true that I *am* using the word 'law' as Hooker and Montesquieu used it. I am using it so deliberately. For I believe that those who make moral laws depend upon the rewards and punishments which enforce them are destroying morality; and that those who make physical laws into mere generalizations from phenomena, are doing their utmost to hinder the search for physical laws; are resolving that we shall have no more Newtons, or Faradays, or Watts; are striving that the student may be crushed under the phenomena which he fancies he can classify." It was when the Commandments of God were hidden under the traditions of men, that science was impossible, because phenomena were worshipped. The assertion at the

Reformation of a right to appeal from men to God, being the rebellion against phenomena, was the commencement of brave scientific investigation.

I trust you will accept the frank statements and complaints of this letter, as a proof of the very sincere and cordial respect which I feel for your character and your work.

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

F. D. MAURICE.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

WE read this sentence (with the omission of one clause) every Sunday in our Communion Service. Many clergymen and many laymen say that such a practice is Judaical: we are returning to the Law; we are not claiming the freedom with which Christ has made us free.

I ask myself, "Are the words true? Did God speak these words?" If not, there is a much greater objection to them than that they are Judaical; they are blasphemous and wicked. We ought to repent in dust and ashes that we have used them for so many

generations. The curse of a frightful lie is upon our heads.

I ask myself, again, "If they were true once, are they true now? Is God speaking these words to Englishmen as He spoke them to Jews?" If not, I have nothing to do with them. I may not be lying so grossly, as on the other supposition; but I am suggesting a lie. I am leading the people who hear me to fancy that One is uttering commands to them who is uttering no such commands. That is the very mildest form which the complaint can take. The phrase "Judaical" is utterly inadequate. If I introduced Siva worship into an English Church, would you charge me with deviating a little too much into an imitation of the Hindoos?

I certainly do not wish that any one who thinks that God did not speak these words once, or that He does not speak them now, should be compelled or induced to use language which to him must be so shocking. I trust that I should refuse to take it into my lips, though it had the authority of all Christendom in its favour, if I believed it to involve a mockery and a deception. Why I do not

believe it to involve a mockery and a deception—why I have used it, and mean to use it—I will explain.

That these words are Jewish, that they are contained in Jewish books, that the Jews suppose God to have spoken them to their fathers, we are all agreed. The Jewish books say that God, the God whom none could see, discovered Himself to a poor shepherd of Mesopotamia; made him know that He was his Guide in his wanderings; the Lord of the land in which he dwelt; the Giver of his children; the Protector of his household; the God who would be with his seed from generation to generation; the God who would make his seed a blessing to all the families of the earth. The Jewish books say that Abraham's family lived under the care of the Lord God; that He remembered them, though they forgot Him. The Jewish books say that the descendants of Abraham became slaves in Egypt; that the Lord God revealed Himself to another shepherd of their race, as the God of his fathers, as the God who cared for his brethren in their bondage, as the Deliverer out of their bondage, as the I AM, the same in all generations. The

Jewish books say that this Lord God did actually deliver the Israelites out of their bondage; that thus He taught them what He was; that all His acts were the acts of a Deliverer, and at the same time of a Ruler and a Judge; that those whom He delivered did not believe Him or trust Him; that all His discipline was to bring them to belief and trust in Him. The Jewish books say that He made these slaves into a NATION; that He gave them LAWS; that He spake these laws; that they saw no similitude; that they only heard a Voice; that thunders and lightnings confirmed the voice. The Jewish books go on to say, that, in all subsequent generations, their people were continually forgetting this King, this Deliverer, and setting up other gods in the place of Him; that so they came into slavery; that they lost the strength and manliness of a nation—the sense that they were a nation; that He governed them still, using their trials and their captivities for the cure of their heartlessness and cowardice; that He delivered them and restored them, showing Himself to be at all times what He had been at first.

What proofs have I that these Jewish books are authentic books; that they are not lying books? I do not know the proofs; I have forgotten them if I once learnt them. They made little impression upon me. I believe they made no impression whatever upon the ignorant nations of Christendom which accepted these Commandments. They hated the Jews—regarded them as an accursed people, whom it was lawful in every possible way to insult and persecute. They broke these Commandments continually, set up images, were guilty of perjury, murdered, committed adultery, stole, bore false witness against each other. Yet they confessed them to be Commandments,—Commandments which it behoved the rulers of nations to enforce, which must be at the root of their laws, without which their laws would be of no worth. I find that in Christendom there has been a hierarchy of priests, who have striven continually to set up their decisions and traditions as divine decisions and traditions; that this hierarchy of priests has exercised a great tyranny over the minds of men in virtue of this pretension; that it has invaded the sanctity of domestic

life ; that it has treated nations either as merely its ministers or as a secular economy, which those who are busy about the kingdom of heaven should despise, or else as exercising a rival power and jurisdiction to its own which it is to resist. I find that when the inhabitants of a land have felt strongly convinced that they are a nation,—that this name imports a reality and not a fiction,—they have risen against the claims of this hierarchy, they have appealed to a Lord God, a Deliverer from those who were using His Name to support their oppressions ; they have turned to His commandments for a protection from the Commandments of men. Then they have become worshippers of the Lord God, who, as the Jews say, revealed Himself to their fathers ; then they have said, “ This Lord God is our Lord ; ” then they have maintained that He did not merely speak once in old times on Sinai, but is speaking now everywhere ; then they have declared that the thunders and lightnings confirm His Voice in the West as much as they did in the East ; then they have confessed a God of Righteousness, whose might is the instrument of His Right-

eousness ; then they have begun to believe that all kings and all men must bow to a Lord of Righteousness, or be broken to pieces ; then they have exchanged freedom for slavery, a manly and womanly morality for a morality which is determined by the opinions of priests and doctors, of sects and schools, or by the habits and fashions of a particular age.

There is my evidence for the substantial veracity of the Jewish records,—for their veracity, so far as I and my people are concerned with them. I need not go back into a distant antiquity, into an uncertain criticism, to find arguments for it. The arguments which show that their history does not stand on a monstrous ghastly invention—that they did not call on One whom they described as the living and true God to vouch for a falsehood—belong to modern experience ; they are about us. We have assumed another ground for our existence than that which these Commandments set forth to us. Religious men have taught us to assume another ground,—to believe in them first, and in a god or gods on their authority. This ground we have discovered to be no ground: It does not sustain

our life as a nation ; it undermines our life as a nation. In later times philosophers, discontented with the sacerdotal ethics, have tried to frame ethical systems on different bases,—on the fitness of things, on the usefulness or mischievousness of actions to individuals or the community ; on sympathies or antipathies. There is a cry, I perceive, everywhere for something beyond these systems, to give them efficiency, to secure any obedience to the principle which they declare to be supreme. Rewards and punishments, present or future, are called in to make the man choose what is fit, or what is useful, or what agrees with his constitution. Thoughtful men demand some stern necessity existing in the nature of things or of men—some logical obligation which shall be stronger than the choice which seems to set it at nought. One of these systems may be good, perhaps all of them may be good ; but I cannot wait till it is settled which is good, or how, if all are good, they are to become operative. I cannot, in defiance of many of them, subject myself or my fellows to the tyranny of motives which are weaker than the man who has the motives, and yet which degrade him. I see in these

Commandments what the logicians require and do not provide. I find the announcement of a living God, who governs men and who makes them free. It is He who speaks to us as He spoke to the Jews, "I am the Lord thy God."

Those words I thankfully hear and repeat, believing them to have been true originally; believing them to be true now; believing that the English nation needs them as much as the Jewish nation needed them; learning what they meant to the Jews by our experience as much as theirs.

But am I not diverting them from the original signification? Is not the Speech which I mean a different kind of speech from that which is described in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy? Was not that a miraculous speech, an exceptional speech, heard once on Sinai, to be heard no more?

I believe those who ask these questions are unconsciously bringing a number of heathen impressions with them, and imputing them to the books, which are specially bearing witness against such impressions. Let us hear what those books say.

The greatest pains are taken to remind us that there was no *similitude* seen on Sinai. The lightnings which are said to have accompanied the voice were, of course, visible to the outward eye; the thunders were, of course, audible to the outward ear. The speech of the Lord God is distinguished from both. That was to remain when the lightnings and thunders had ceased. The letters were to be written on tables, preserved in a book; the voice of the Lord God would come fresh from Him to the nation of Israel—to each Israelite in every age. It was to be received as His Word, uttered by Him. There was the value of the signs. They associated the sounds with a Living Being. They would cease; but there would always be signs of that kind, or of some other kind, which would show that He was not silent. The Word itself was addressed at first, would be addressed always, to the Conscience of the nation, and of the individual.

I believe, then, that I take this speech to mean just what Psalmists and Prophets took it to mean,—just what the idolatrous Jews, who never trembled at the word of God, never obeyed it, but only trembled at outward

terrors, did *not* take it to mean. They could only suppose it to be a sound in the ears, just as so many wiser people in our Christian age suppose it to have been. I grant that no Psalmist or Prophet supposed the Word to come *from* the conscience of a man. That opinion overthrows all their teaching. I believe it overthrows all sense of national unity, all belief in a One God. Every man's tastes, and impulses, and judgments, then, are exalted into a law. There is no common law binding all. And there is, in reality, no conscience, for a conscience which does not own a ruler and a Judge has lost its meaning and definition. When we proclaim a Lord God of the nation, who is speaking to it and delivering it, the conscience awakens to recognise the message. It is not found to be a turbulent assertion of each man's right to think and believe what he likes; but the acknowledgment of an Eternal Ruler, who can break the bonds which have chained men to visible things, to temporary authorities, to their own delusions.

But while I cannot be too thankful that the Church, of which I am a minister, authorizes me to proclaim every Sunday that the Lord

God who spoke to the Jews speaks the same words to the English people, saying to them, "I am the Lord your God," I am quite unable to justify the mutilation of that sentence in our Service. The omission of the words "which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," seems to me a perilous and a vital omission. Could the compilers of the Service suppose that they made it more fit for a later time, and for other nations, by suppressing the terms which give it a special and a local character? But the terms are there; we cannot deny the Jewish origin of the commandment; if we do not suppose the Jewish nation was chosen to be a specimen of God's dealings with nations, to show forth Him to all nations, we give up the whole history. Who is the Lord God, whom alone I am to worship? Is it not One who delivered His people out of the house of bondage? "Yes; in some typical sense: but *Egypt*, what is that to us?" Divines may speak to us in typical senses. Who cares for such senses? If God speaks, it is in an actual sense, to actual nations, to nations who are crying out for an actual Deliverer. If He has not actually

delivered a nation in the old time out of its bondage, what is He to England and Italy now? If He has delivered a nation out of bondage, that is a revelation of what He is now. That revelation a nation can receive when all arguments about books, all proofs of the Being of God from nature or from metaphysics, have lost their power, if they ever possessed any.

Whatever may have been the original motives for this change in the sentence, we have suffered and are suffering grievously for it now. Our people do not really understand that they are to worship a God who delivers out of bondage, and no other. They easily drop into the confession and dread of a God who is the very reverse of this, of One who is Himself the author of bondage. If permission is given to any who cannot honestly repeat the Commandments to omit them, let us, who do repeat them gladly and thankfully, have permission to rectify this defect. At all events, let us labour sedulously to teach our people the original form of the Commandment; let us tell them that they are violating it, and depriving all the other

Commandments of their sanction, if the Lord God who breaks the yoke of the oppressor is not their God.

Subject to this grave exception, I can conceive nothing more admirable or more instructive than the use which is made of the Commandments in our Service, or than the place which is chosen for them. The Communion at once suggests the New Covenant; the prayer that God will write His laws in our hearts is a claim to be under that New Covenant. Here is that fulfilment of the Commandments which I hope to trace in each one of them—a fulfilment which is the very reverse of the destruction of them. He who delivered one nation out of bondage reveals Himself in His Son as the Deliverer of all nations out of their bondage; He who bids them worship Him, and Him only, baptizes the nations with His free Spirit, that they *may* worship Him, and Him only. They will worship other gods—gods, not of salvation, but of damnation—if they do not accept that Revelation of Him in the Redeemer of the world; the Commandments will be a dead letter—nay, a killing letter—to them, if they do not yield them-

selves to that quickening Spirit of Truth and Liberty. If they separate Christ's Redemption from the old Commandment, there is immense danger of their looking upon it as a Redemption from the God of Righteousness, not a Redemption by Him from the power of Evil. If they separate the gift of the Spirit from the old Commandment, there is immense danger that they will regard the Spirit as some treasure of their own; then they will not worship the Lord God, but themselves.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, we bless Thee that Thou didst speak of old to Thy people of Israel, when they had forgotten Thee, and had fallen under the power of earthly tyrants. We bless Thee that Thou didst reveal Thyself to them as their Deliverer out of the house of bondage. We bless Thee that Thou didst command them to serve no God but Thee. We bless Thee that Thou speakest to all nations as Thou didst speak to that nation. We bless Thee that Thou hast been the same in every generation and to every people. We bless Thee that, by

great signs and wonders, Thou hast again and again testified to our nation that Thou art our Deliverer. We bless Thee that thou hast broken the yoke of visible tyrants who have oppressed us, and of false gods which we had made for ourselves. We bless Thee that, when priests told us that we could only hear Thy voice speaking through them, Thou didst testify that poor men might take refuge in Thee from their injustice and falsehood. O God, we have strayed from Thy ways; we have not believed that Thou art indeed speaking to us and caring for us; we have not believed that Thou art the Deliverer. We, our Rulers, our priests, our people, have asked how we might be saved from Thee, instead of turning to Thee, and asking Thee to save us from our enemies and from those that hate us. We have all broken this Commandment of Thine. O God, we know that we must be a feeble and divided nation whilst we worship other gods before Thee, the living and true God. Thou only canst restore us; Thou only canst convert us to Thyself, and canst give us trust in Thee. O God, we bless Thee that Thou art giving clear testimonies that Thou hast not

forgotten the different peoples of the earth, if they have forgotten Thee. We bless Thee that Thou art raising up Thy great power, and coming amongst them, and asserting Thy eternal Laws against those who have set up their own decrees in place of Thine. We bless Thee that, in wonderful ways, and by men who know not that they are Thy instruments, Thou art bringing nations out of the bondage into which they have fallen through loss of faith in Thee. O God, show them that it is from Thee, and not from the skill of men, or the might of armies, except as Thou guidest them, that their freedom comes. Let them not fall into the worship of cunning or of force, which has ever been the source of slavery. Teach them to believe in Thy everlasting Righteousness and Truth; then will they discern and honour righteous men and true patriots, and scorn all baseness, and become great and wise and brave nations in Thy sight. Hear us, O God, our Father, in the name and for the sake of Him in whom Thou hast redeemed all the nations, and who is the Head of all nations, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

HERE is emphatically the Jewish Commandment. By observance of it the Jewish nation was distinguished from the people of all other lands. The Jewish nation disobeyed this Commandment, yielding to the same inclinations which were working in the people of all other lands. Against this Commandment the countries in modern times which have been included in the Catholic Church have striven vehemently. "Christ's coming," they have said, "must in some sense have repealed it. The incarnation of the Word must have sanctified outward likenesses of the human form. The image is, of course, not the final object of

the devotion; but it may help devotion: a certain homage may be paid to it.”

It is needless to say that not a part of Jewish history and Jewish prophecy, but the whole of it, is pointed against the invasions of this Commandment. The record of the effects of the neglect of it is always of the same character. It is always that the people sold themselves to idols, and that they were sold into the hands of the tyrants round about them. They would not serve God joyfully in their own land. They must serve other gods in a land that was not theirs. It is national degeneracy, national slavery, which is the punishment from generation to generation of worshipping the works of men's hands, which had mouths but they spoke not, ears but they heard not, eyes but they saw not.

And every deliverance which is recorded to the people is also of the same character. Bitter suffering brings them to discover that these dumb idols cannot help them; they remember the unseen Deliverer who brought their fathers out of bondage; they turn to Him. Those who first turn are bitterly denounced by their neighbours: they are

irreligious and profane ; the powers above will be avenged on them. But the Lord God hears them, and puts strength into them. The yoke of the oppressor is broken. Israel serves Him again. It rises to be a nation again.

In nearly every case, the priests are chief in these acts of disobedience. They yield, indeed, often, as the first of them did, to a popular impulse. The people must have a visible god ; what has become of him who told them of the invisible God they wot not. Many of the kings co-operate with the priests. It was inconvenient for the ten tribes to go up to Jerusalem : a calf in Bethel would be far more desirable. Or Ahaz sees an altar at Damascus which takes his fancy ; or he thinks he may make amends for his transgressions by sending his children through the fire to Moloch.

A national reformation begins with overthrowing the images ; whether it is conducted by the prophet Elijah or the king Josiah, the religion of the people is shaken to its centre ; the priests are treated with an indignity which they suppose is fatal to all order and reverence. But the Scriptures speak of the

destruction of images as a sacred effort, though seldom effectual, to terminate disorders, to restore the reverence of the true God.

I think the parallel in modern times is very exact. The image worship has been adopted and defended on the pleas to which I have alluded. Whatever the pleas have been worth, the effects have been manifest. The hearts of the people have been drawn to the visible things. The God of Righteousness has become to them an object of dread. The priest, no doubt, might approach Him at the altar. The mediators of whom the images spoke, if not the images themselves, were invoked to keep Him at a distance; to deprecate His evil purposes against them. The fear of the Lord God, which psalmists and prophets believed to be the strength of a nation, the beginning of all wisdom to men, is exchanged for the fear of what He may do against His creatures to destroy them. The priests have a morality of their own—a morality admired by the people, because totally unintelligible to them, almost entirely unconnected, it would appear, with those maxims of fidelity and justice which they are expected to follow in their

common dealings. The struggle against this morality has been a struggle to recover the morality which is needful for the existence of a nation and of a family; it has involved many shocks to the popular religion; it has ended either in anarchy or in the discovery of a Lord God who may be trusted; who cares for nations; who is their Deliverer out of bondage.

The history of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, of its successes, its defeats, its virtues, its crimes, its blessings, its mischiefs, is the history of nations fighting to assert their own existence. They are crushed under a multitude of visible objects of worship, under the weight of a priesthood, which appears itself to determine what shall be the objects of worship—nay, to create them. They hear the words of the Old Law. They hear of a God who hates idols, who treats them as abominations. They hear what came to the Israelites when they yielded to the abominations. They find written in sunbeams the tale of their own acts, of their own sufferings. The old record comes to them with an evidence which it could not derive from all

the arguments of all the doctors in the world. They read of a jealous God who watched over Israel; who forbad it to take the first step in this downward course; who punished it for each successive step; who sent trials of all kinds to wean the land from its idols; who only said at last, "It is joined to them, let it alone." They said, "Is not this jealous God watching over us too? Is He not seeking to draw us from those tyrants to whom we have yielded up our hearts? Is He not seeking, by these trials, to bind us to Himself? May we not call upon Him as our Deliverer?"

That is the way in which these reformers became such strong believers in the Old Testament. They could not help believing in it. They found in it the very tidings which they wanted to hear. It told them of Him whom they had forgotten, and who had not forgotten them. It told them of a God of their fathers; of one who would be the God of their children. We dislike the word "jealous." It sounds to us, in our dainty, and also learned, phraseology, "*anthropomorphic*." It sounded to them honest, blessed language; they did not dislike

it because it was human; any language that was not human would have been nothing to them. It might have been finer; it would have been ineffectual and false. But so far as anthropomorphism implies submission to visible images, human or brutal, this divine jealousy was precisely that which they were sure could alone raise them out of it. If there was no such jealousy, no God who felt it, and felt it about them, they must continue slaves for ever.

But have not we, in the nineteenth century, risen above the need of this language? If we have risen above the temptation to visible worship; if we are not as other men are—as those who surround us, as those who went before us—we may not need a Lord God to save us from it, a Lord God to keep our hearts united to Him. I feel that I am as other men are, that we in England are as other men are, that if the jealous God do not keep us from sinking into idolatry, we shall sink into perhaps the very grossest forms of it. I do, therefore, cling very closely to the old Commandments, to this specially Jewish Commandment. I cling to the very letter of it.

And by doing so, I rise above the letter of it. Those must become enslaved to the letter who read it simply as a passage in a sacred book. Those who hear it as a word coming forth, age after age, from the living God, the jealous God, will connect it with all living facts, with all events that are befalling their own nation and other nations, in this day. Those who receive it as a part of a Communion Service must ask about this as about the last Commandment, how it has been fulfilled by Him, in whom the Communion between heaven and earth, between God and man, has been established. That inquiry will bring them directly into contact with the pleas for idolatry which have been urged both for the old world and the new.

We may admit with awe and wonder that the tendency to worship graven images—likenesses of things in heaven and earth and under the earth—points to a deep demand in the human spirit. “Oh Lord God, Thou canst not be so far from us as Thou seemest to be. There must be some image in which we can apprehend what Thou art. Is it above? is it around us? is it beneath us? is it in all things

we see?" A deep demand! How shall it be met? Each race tries to meet it. Let us do their attempts all honour. Think not of the low animal worship of the Egyptians. Think of the grand repose of the statue of Rameses. But it is the repose of death. How glorious is the astral and solar worship of the Persian! Very glorious if he can but believe the Man has some elevation of his own, a glory as great as that of the stars. The Greek does believe that. Beautiful human forms are in the sun and stars—may be imaged by the sculptor on earth. Very marvellous these forms are assuredly! But is there a reality which answers to them? Or are they dreams? Is the artist higher than that he conceives? "Certainly not," cries the Roman. "The Jupiter of the Capitol has in him a justice and authority beyond any dream of ours. It is the fatherly authority, which reaches its highest point there." If there is such an authority, must it not come forth and show itself? What will become of Roman justice if it does not? The nations will feel the justice, and yet groan. Rome itself will become venal and slavish.

We have been taught, and believe, that the Jew was forbidden to worship images of God because he was waiting for the perfect image, for Him who was to reveal the truth of all that men had been dreaming of; to gather up in Himself all that their consciences had told them must be in Him after whom they were formed; to scatter the partial conceptions which had kept them apart, and lowered Him to their level.

This image, we are told, the Jews refused to acknowledge. The Man Jesus could not be the image of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. It was blasphemy to say He was. He must be a blasphemer because He called God His father. That was the claim for which He was pronounced guilty of death. That was the claim which Christendom believes that His death and resurrection established as true. He was declared to be the Son of God. He came from the Father. He ascended to the Father.

And having adopted this revelation as the fulfilment of the old Covenant—the name of the Father as the great discovery which Christ made to mankind, the baptism with the Spirit in whom the Father and the Son are one, as the

great gift to mankind—the defenders of the Catholic faith dare to maintain that it has repealed the old Commandment, that it has given men a right which they had not before to bring the Godhead under likenesses which they have conceived! I say that if we accept the revelation of Christ as the true revelation, we must suppose that He has unfolded to us the very depth of the Godhead in declaring us to the Father; that we must say with the Creed, He has taken the Manhood into God. So He has satisfied the desire of nations. So He has taught them that they form one family. And every image or picture which men have been induced to worship, every saint who has been put between man and God, has been a denial of this revelation, a refusal to acknowledge that the way to the Father has been opened through the Son, that the Father is drawing men through the Spirit to Himself. Thanks be to God that His jealousy has burnt hot in all ages against this degradation of His glory, against the restoration of this great source of all curses and divisions among His creatures. Thanks be to God for the testimonies of Jews, of Mahometans, however

little they have confessed His true Image, against the false images that have usurped its place. Thanks be to Him that that jealousy was never more manifesting its power than now; that it will wax fiercer, as we trust, till it has utterly abolished the idols of Christendom, till it has cast down the father on earth who has been exalted to his throne in defiance of His command who revealed the Father in Heaven.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, we bless Thee that Thou hast inspired all men with an insatiable longing to behold Thy image. We bless Thee that Thou givest this proof to us that there is a bond between us and Thee which cannot be broken. We bless Thee that we cannot separate our justice from Thy justice, our mercy from Thy mercy, our truth from Thy truth. But, O God, Thou knowest that the temptation of us all is to make Thee after our image, not to confess that we are made in Thy image. We thank Thee that Thou didst in Thy great mercy choose out a nation in the old world,

and didst forbid it to make any image of Thee, and didst show, by bitter experience, what misery came to it from breaking that Commandment. We bless Thee that Thou didst, by Thy punishments of this transgression, bear witness of Thy loving jealousy over that nation, of Thy desire to reclaim it from its slavery to visible things, and to bind it to Thee. We bless Thee that in the fulness of the time Thou didst manifest Thy true and perfect image in One born of a woman. We bless Thee that Thou didst raise Him from the dead, and declare Him to be Thy Son with power; and didst send Thy messengers to turn all nations from the images which they had worshipped, to this Image, in whom they might behold the glory of Thy nature, and the glory of their own. We bless Thee that Thou didst enable the nations which had served the works of their own hands, and had bowed to things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, to own Thy well-beloved Son as the only Image of Thee, as the Image after which Thou hadst created them. We bless Thee that Thou didst receive those nations into Thy covenant of Baptism, and didst command

them to tell all the nations of Thy Son, that they might, through Him, turn from their dark idols and their evil gods to Thee, the living and true God. But, O Father! these baptized nations, instead of bearing that witness, have themselves fallen down before images, the works of their own hands. O God, they have thought to honour the flesh and form of Thy Son by rebelling against Thy ancient Commandment. So from generation to generation they have wandered further from Him, and have sought creatures like themselves to trust in and adore, and have asked these creatures to save them from Thee. We bless Thee, O God, that Thou hast been jealous over these baptized nations, as Thou wast over the nation of Thy old Covenant, and hast again and again testified by Thy sore punishments, how evil and bitter a thing it is to forsake Thee and serve idols.* We bless Thee, O God, that Thou wert jealous over our nation, and didst recover our fathers from many of their idols, and didst teach them that Thy Son is the One Mediator in whom Thou revealest Thyself to men, and in whom men may draw nigh to Thee. We bless Thee,

that we have been a free and brave nation, only so far as we have observed Thy Commandment, and have kept ourselves from idols. But Thou knowest, O God, we have not kept ourselves from them. We do not bow to wood and stone, or set up the images of human creatures, or the image of Thy glorified Son. But we worship the lowest and meanest of all Thy creatures—the money with which Thou hast entrusted us to use for Thy glory, and for the good of the land, and for the help of those that dwell upon it. And, O God, from generation to generation this idolatry increases upon us, and debases us more. Thou hast, in Thy mercy, delivered us from some of the crimes into which it had led us, from buying men and women, and using them as our chattels. We bless Thee that Thou didst stir the hearts of Thy true servants to hate and loathe that iniquity, and to fight against all the power which upheld it. But, O God, our rich men buy the souls of the poor; they persuade their fellow creatures to sell their consciences, that they may sit in high places, and rule the land. And we think Thou dost not care

for this wickedness. Our priests do not mourn over it, our preachers do not lift up their voices against it. We do not feel degraded in the sight of men, or humbled in Thy sight by reason of it. O God, awaken Thy servants to go forth against these abominations, and to break them in pieces, and stamp them small, as Thy servants the king and prophets of Israel did of old the images to which their countrymen were bowing down. And set all the nations free from the idols which are dividing them, and enslaving them, and defacing Thy true Image in them. Bring them into Thy clear light, into Thy glorious liberty. And may Thy ancient people, whom Thou hast preserved so wonderfully amidst the persecutions of Christians and their own worship of Mammon, confess Thy true Image, and be once more a living nation, bearing witness to all nations of Thee, the everlasting Lord—saying, as Thy prophet said, “Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Isaac acknowledge us not.” O Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Jew and Gentile, of

Barbarian and Scythian, of bond and free,
may Thy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and
the Son, save Israel out of its bondage, and
make it a blessing to all the families of the
earth. AMEN.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

WHAT does this Commandment prohibit? Some will say, perjury in a court of justice. Some will say, profane swearing anywhere. Some will say, any trifling with what is holy and sacred under any pretext.

It may prohibit perjury, profane swearing, trifling with what is sacred. But if it does, it brings perjury, profane swearing, trifling with what is holy, under the title, "taking the name of the Lord thy God in vain." They must be interpreted by that definition; it cannot be resolved into any one of them, or into all of them.

We who read the Psalms day by day in our worship, must know how this NAME of God is spoken of in them; how it is described as very near, as very great and terrible; as the

refuge and high tower; as that in which the righteous find all their delight and hope.

We who repeat the Lord's Prayer, and teach our youngest children to repeat it, cannot suppose that this NAME merely belongs to the Old Testament. "Hallowed be Thy NAME," is the first petition which is sent up to the Father in heaven from every city in Christendom.

We who read the seventeenth chapter of St. John, as the record of the Lord's Prayer in the highest sense--of that Prayer which He offered to His Father on the Passover night, just before He was to be sacrificed, cannot quite forget that these are the last words of it, "And I have declared Thy NAME unto them, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved them may be in them, and I in them."

And yet, if a divine in our days is asked the significance of this word,—which recurs so continually in all the deepest devotions of the holy men of every age, which is put forward so prominently in the simplest of all forms, which was adopted in the most awful of all hours, by Him whom we believe to be the Son

of God, the High Priest of the Universe,—he probably mutters something about “a Hebraic form of expression, which answers very nearly to what we mean by the divine attributes.”

What we mean by the divine attributes I never quite understood. But if we mean what the word would seem to convey, that we “attribute” certain qualities to God, then I say, that not only the Hebrew form of expression does *not* answer very nearly to what we mean, but that it directly contradicts what we mean. The devout Hebrew believed that his nation was called out of all nations, to bear witness against those who attribute their thoughts to God—to bear witness of that which He reveals Himself to be, of that Righteousness which men are created to trust and to obey. When we talk of God’s attributes, we assume, however unconsciously, that our conceptions are the ground of His being; when we fear His Name, we confess that His being is the ground of our conceptions. This “Hebraic form of expression” therefore seems to me the true form of expression for human beings. I dare not use it, be it Hebraic or anything else, if I did not think so; as I do

think so, I hold no Commandment to be more permanent or more necessary for my nation, and for me, than this one.

It does not only speak to me of an awful *Name*. It speaks to me also of *Guilt*. This, at least, we cannot treat as an obsolete notion of the old world. It has something to do with the modern ages, with the legislation of every State, with the heart of every individual. *What* it has to do with either, it concerns us greatly to know. Guilt certainly affects the order of nations and the life of each person very marvellously. Where shall we find an explanation of it?

“Not here,” many will say : “ here we have only an outward law ; a law of penalties. Guilt has to do with the conscience.” Most heartily do I respond to that assertion. If these are merely Commandments which decree certain penalties against wrong-doers, if they are not addressed to the conscience, I acknowledge that they can never help us to any understanding of the nature and misery of guilt. But I should say that this Commandment was absolutely free from any, the remotest, allusion to penalties. It merely

assumes that there is a Lord God who speaks, a man who is created to hear His word. It testifies that the man who speaks as if there were such a Lord God, and yet as if He were not actually present, knowing what His creature means, is the guilty man. It is not said how much he feels the guilt. The Commandment only affirms that the Lord holds him guilty; treats him as at war with Him. He is found out; the light is upon him, when he is most trying to hide himself from it.

When a man vouches the Name of God for a lie, all tribunals declare that he is guilty of perjury. Smaller acts of indifference or trifling may not lead the person who commits them to that issue. But so far as he is weakening the awe of the people who surround him for the Name, so far as he is teaching them that it signifies little, so far he is diffusing the temper which produces the false oath. And what is there that restrains perjury in a land? No one doubts that punishments should be appointed for it, that they should be steadily enforced, that the utmost vigilance should be exerted to discover who have incurred them. But judges acknowledge that the punishments

which the best legislators invent are insufficient to overpower the motives which tempt to the crime; and that the criminal continually eludes their detection. They seek to strengthen themselves with the terrors of another world; they hold out to the perjurer the punishments which God has appointed for him after death. Are *these* terrors effectual? Do these threats check the habit of perjury in a country? The test should be those countries in which they are resorted to most, in which there is the most skilfully devised machinery for enforcing them, in which that machinery is most recognised by the mass of the people as a divine one. Ireland, Italy, Spain—these ought to be the lands in which there is least of false swearing, in which the testimony of witnesses may be relied upon with the greatest security. Will they abide that proof? Praise the virtues or the religion of the inhabitants of these lands as you please, I do not deny their virtues or their religion—I ask whether their religion has brought forth this virtue, whether it teaches them not to take the name of the Lord God, the God of Truth, in vain?

I dare not conceal my opinion, that just so far as we have used these future terrors for the purpose of assisting the operation of the law against perjury, just so far we have diminished the awe of that Name which is nigh to man at every moment, just so far we have made the sense of God's judgments less clear, just so far we have caused men to dread punishment more than guilt, to count concealment the greatest blessing, to deem the discovery of the truth that which is chiefly to be avoided. And these influences, which are so ineffectual in deterring from crime, tend to deprave the mind and conscience of the whole nation. They diffuse through it that feeling which the Jewish prophets said was destroying their nation; distrust in the Name on which the nation stands, a suspicion that the Deliverer is our enemy.

Here, again, I find in that old Judaical faith, of which we have such dread—which we are told that it is desirable to sever as much as possible from Christianity—the protection against some of the worst evils and corruptions which have grown up in the heart of our Christianity, as well as the explanation

of the very principles which are developed in the New Testament and which constitute its Gospel. The Name of the Lord God, the righteous Name which He had revealed, was taken in vain by the Jewish people; they trifled with it and mocked it as we do. And the prophets showed them what had come, what would come, of this indifference and mockery. The Lord did not hold the nation or the man guiltless who yielded to it; the nation and the man would find that He did not. What was the great misery to both? The loss of confidence in the true God, the preference of untrue gods, of gods that led them deeper and deeper into untruth. What was the remedy? Nothing but return to trust; nothing but the acknowledgment of the God who had made them a nation, who kept them a nation, who had been with them from age to age. Nothing but belief in the great Name—the Name of the God of their salvation—could raise them out of their guilt, could restore them to their healthful and honest state. Every event that happened to the nation was the Lord God's call to them to own that they had not trusted Him, His

proof how great is the curse of distrust. The guilt, the cowardice, came from that; there was no innocence, no manliness, but in turning to Him and putting their trust in Him.

The psalmists, the prophets, had need to learn in their own experience the lesson which they taught others. *They* forgot the Lord God of their fathers; *they* distrusted Him. Then there was no evil thing, no adultery, no murder, which the best of them—the man after God's heart—might not commit. There was no state of lying into which he might not fall. And he only arose again when he believed in the Name of the Lord God of the whole land—the Lord God of David, and Uriah, and Bathsheba; when he trusted in that eternal, impartial Righteousness, which the guilty man had counted his enemy, from which he had sought to hide himself. He came forth into the light—he fled to that Name as a high tower, and a refuge from which he had fled away: so he was set free from his guilt; it was his no longer; he had disclaimed it. He was a new man, because he confided in Him who does not change, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the same.

The Apostle of the Gentiles builds his doctrine of forgiveness and freedom from guilt on these Jewish examples. He desires that Gentiles, as much as Jews, should enter into the meaning of them, should know that freedom from the conscience of sin which David won after he had sinned. He proclaims that the Righteousness of God was manifested in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, to Gentiles as well as to Jews; that all alike may believe in that Name which He has revealed; that all who believe in it have the remission of sins, which they can obtain in no other way. They cease to take the Name in vain; they claim it as their tower and resting-place; they run into it, and are safe. For God has justified, not this man or that, but all alike—men of every nation and kindred—by raising His Son, their Prince, from the dead; therefore all may rejoice in His holy Name—all may share the freedom from guilt which confidence in that Name gives.

This was the Gospel to which men listened in the sixteenth century; it was emphatically a Gospel to nations; those who received it took up their place as citizens; the priestly

indulgence was felt to be worth nothing to the man, for it did not deliver him from guilt,—to be of the most deadly injury to the nation, for it promoted crime. The priestly terrors the man could set at defiance, for he could trust in the Lord God whose Name had been revealed to the whole land for its salvation. We have been robbed of this Gospel, not by the Jewish faith which has entered into it, but by the loss of that faith. We hear no more of a Name in which all may trust, but only of a Name in which those who believe may trust. It is not itself a ground of confidence, but those who are fortunate enough to have the confidence may exercise it for their own comfort. Deliverance from punishment is, again, substituted for deliverance from guilt. And this because the Lord God, who does not hold them guiltless that take His Name in vain, is pictured to Englishmen, as well as to Italians and Spaniards, to Protestants as well as Romanists, as a Being from whom they have need to be delivered, not as the Deliverer: as One from whose wrath Christ justifies those who will accept Him, not as One whose Righteousness Christ reveals for the justification of

mankind; not as One of whom we say, in St. Paul's language, "It is GOD that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

I fear that all of us are in this sin. Legislators have done much to lessen the awe of God's Name, by multiplying oaths till the sanctity of oaths has vanished, and till many think that we shall honour God best by abolishing them altogether. Judges lessen the awe of God's Name, by depriving it of its present force, by leading poor men to suppose that it will be the horror of all horrors to die, because, when they die, they shall meet God. Above all, we priests do ourselves take the Name of God in vain more than all others, by conjuring with it, when we want to frighten wrong-doers, or to put down some person whom we think God's enemy; whereas it is our duty to hold it up to all men and to all nations as the object of their undoubting trust, to warn all men and all nations what befalls them when they lose their trust in it. In plagues of fire and of blood, our Lord God may teach the nations of Christendom the truth of that old Jewish lesson which they have deemed so vulgar and un-

meaning. They may find that they have been very vain, but that the Commandment is not vain, that it has an everlasting might for us and for all men.

PRAYER.

O Lord our God, we bless Thee that Thou didst teach Thy ancient people that Thy Holy Name is the foundation of all Laws and Covenants, and that they could only be a people while they feared it and trusted in it. We bless Thee that Thou didst teach them that Thou lookest into the hearts of all men, and knowest when they are using Thy Name truly, or are trifling with it and taking it in vain. We bless Thee that Thou didst teach them that to trust in Thy Name is joy, and peace, and freedom. We bless Thee that, when their consciences became guilty and foul, because they had forgotten Thy Name, and broken Thy Commandment, Thou didst bring them back to confidence in Thee, and didst set them free from guilt. We bless Thee that in Thy only-begotten Son Thou hast manifested Thy Name

to all nations, for the forgiveness of their sins ; that Thou hast claimed all alike in Him as Thy children ; that Thou hast invited all to draw nigh to Thee, in Him, with pure and clean hearts ; that Thou leadest sinners by Thy Holy Spirit to seek Thee, and find Thy Name their everlasting refuge. We bless Thee that Thy Son has taught to ask of Thee, as the first and highest blessing Thou canst give us, that Thy Name may be hallowed. We bless Thee that His perfect life on earth was a perpetual hallowing of Thy Name. We bless Thee that He has promised us His divine Spirit to write it in our hearts, and to hallow it there. But we have not hallowed Thy Name. We have not believed that Thou art in very deed our Father, and the Father of all the families of the earth. We have taken Thy Name in vain. We have taught the people of our land to distrust it, to think of Thee as their enemy, to desire that Thou shouldst not know the secrets of their hearts, to dread Thy discovery and Thy punishment, not the guilt which keeps them apart from Thee. O God, we are feeling the misery of our unbelief, and trans-

gression of Thy Commandment. Lying and Perjury are in our land; and all our controversies will not drive them out. Have mercy upon us, and bring us back to the true fear of Thy Name. Let us not learn it by the precepts of men, but from Thy Law and Thy Gospel. O teach our people, and teach Thy people of all lands, that Thy Name is now, as ever, the only ground of their confidence in each other, of their fellowship with each other. Teach them that that will abide when all other things to which they have looked for protection fade away and perish. Teach them that they are sealed with Thy Holy Name, the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the one God blessed for ever, and that in that Name they may rejoice with free and guileless hearts, now, and through all ages. AMEN.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

THERE is another reason given for keeping the Sabbath Day in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy, “And remember that thou wast a bondsman in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.”

If we are seeking for arguments against this Commandment and its application to ourselves, none will be found more plausible and available than this difference. How can both reasons be the divine reasons? Are they not different explanations or justifications by a

human legislator, for an institution which he has devised? To me one of the greatest proofs that the Sabbath is *not* the fruit of human legislation is, that deliverance from bondage is assigned as a ground for remembering and observing it. Human legislators, Jewish and Christian, have made this institution into a bondage, instead of accepting it as a sign of redemption from bondage. The words in Deuteronomy necessarily recall the first Commandment, that which I have maintained to be the interpreter of all the rest. According to them, the Sabbath is an institution which is especially to make known the character of the Lord God to all generations of Israelites.

They came out of a land where the tyranny of the ruler was sustained by the tyranny of a multitude of priests and soothsayers, where these priests and soothsayers prescribed various modes of invoking and appeasing the powers in heaven above, in the earth beneath, in the waters under the earth, or that more terrible Being who might be above all whom they could not name. The bodily bondage which Pharaoh imposed might be cast off; how could *this* bondage, this spell over the heart

and conscience of the slave as well as the master, ever be broken? See whether the Book of Exodus, which is supposed to be at variance with the later book, does not tell us.

A Lord God who works and who rests; whose work is the work of creating or giving life, whose rest is the rest of delight in beholding that which is very good; a Lord God who commands His subjects to work as He works, to rest as He rests; a Lord God who does not lay down a mere decree respecting rest and work, but who binds them into the succession and order of the life of His subjects; a Lord God who appoints rest for those human creatures and for those animals that have been deemed, by the rich and powerful of the earth, only made for perpetual toil on their behalf: such a Lord God is spoken of here if I read the simple letter of it, if I put no gloss of my own or of any other man upon it.

Sir Rutherford Alcock observes in his work upon Japan (answering the arguments of some who have attempted to defend the Sabbath from its universality), that he can find no traces of a Sabbath except among the Jews,

or in those nations which have adopted the institutions of the Jews. The remark is, I conceive, undoubtedly true, and of the greatest worth. I would urge the student to test it by history, and to bring another remark to the same test. I believe no nation can be found which in its thoughts of the Divinity has been able to reconcile the idea of Work with the idea of Rest; none in which they have not dwelt together in perpetual collision, each suggesting the other, and each, when predominant, provoking, by its own feebleness or its own weakness, a reaction in favour of the other. This, which is true of all popular conceptions of the Divine nature, such as are embodied in legends and ceremonies, is equally true of all philosophical conceptions founded upon them or produced in opposition to them. It meets us on the very threshold of our studies in Cicero's book on the Nature of the Gods. The Stoic and Epicurean can always retort on his opponent (he does again and again use the advantage), "A fine divinity, indeed, who is always in a bustle about the affairs of the creatures below him!"—"A fine divinity, indeed, who is always reposing in selfish indolence!"

That discussion belongs to the highest time of Græco-Roman civilization—its final results contemplated and reported by the man who was best able to appreciate them in their practical as well as in their theoretical aspects.

“What!” some one will exclaim; “then you imagine that these speculations, the work of ages, after all chiefly the possession of refined intellects, were present to a Jewish shepherd, if there was such a legislator as Moses, or to the general Jewish mind in its most barbarous period, if there was no such legislator?” No, that is precisely what I do *not* imagine; what I have no need to imagine and cannot imagine if I believe the Commandment to be what it professes to be, the Commandment of God. Then I have nothing to do with a particular Jewish legislator or with the general Jewish mind. Then I suppose Him who created men in His image, to know what He created, and to ordain for them what was best, that they might live as if they were formed in His image, and might rise out of their partial and confused notions to an apprehension of their Author. Then I suppose Him to have de-

clared His laws for the good not of philosophers more than of men-servants and maid-servants. Then I suppose the imperfect apprehensions of the philosophers as well as of the men-servants and the maid-servants, to be signs and witnesses of their relation to Him—confessions how little they can enter into that relation—silent petitions that He would reveal Himself to them. And if I discover in a certain portion of the race—that very limited portion of it to which Sir Rutherford Alcock refers—not only the formal acknowledgment of a revelation of God which reconciles rest and work as co-essential elements of His nature, but an actual institution or order of life which assumes their union in Him, and their union in men, because men are formed after His likeness—I may be tempted to consider whether there is not some warrant for the opinion which I find prevailing among this portion of the race, that in them and their seed all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

But, again, the work of the Lord God is in this Commandment represented as the work of Creation. This, the six days commemorate.

The work, if I take as my interpreter the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, is that of enduing creatures with seeds of an ever-renewing life, a recurring day and night; lights that remain from generation to generation, and appear statedly to fix times and seasons. At the head of all is a creature with the same reproductive power as the other animals, made male and female, with dominion over them, in the image of God. The work is this. It may be converted by divines into the manufacture of a dead world. That is what they may understand, or lead others to understand, by Creation. But they set at nought the letter of the book by such an opinion. No doctrine of continuity propounded by philosophers is more distinctly the assertion of the capacities of self-renewal in vegetables, in animals, in man, than this record, which is supposed to be at variance with it. A world of this kind—the actual world which we behold—the operations and relations of which physiologists investigate, is the one which the Book of Genesis sets forth to us, if we read it strictly; this, according to the express terms of the Commandment, is

the Divine work, the pattern of man's work, that which the six days are to keep before him and to assure him has the stamp of the Lord God his Deliverer upon it. The *fact* of this life, perpetual illustrations and displays of it, will be about him wherever he dwells, wherever he travels. The man-servant and the maid-servant must take notice of them; the experience of this teeming life, of these permanent yet changing lights, of this regular succession, will be wrought into the tissue of their ordinary existence, of their commonest services. The six days say to the most ordinary men and women, to the profoundest students, "Behold the work of the Lord God! See how He *is* working; even as you are. The creation is always new, coming forth each day fresh from His hands."

But are the heaven and the earth *only* a repetition of endless movements? Does not that *recurrence* of movements point to an order, a completion? "The Lord rested." "The Lord finished the work which He had made." When the character of the rest is described, it is said, "He beheld His works, and lo! they

were very good." The seventh day, according to the Commandment, commemorates this rest. God pronounces the day holy, because it speaks of His rest. He appoints it for man. He desires them, one and all, to enter into His rest. The rest, like the work, is connected with our rest. The notion of God working no more, after the six days, is contradicted by the very observation of the six days, by the renewal of them for each man for each generation of men. If men work still, God works still. The notion of the rest of God being only on the seventh day is contradicted by the observance of the seventh day: by the renewal of it for each man and each generation of men. The whole institution is, therefore, a protest against the hard material notions which have been grounded upon it; so far as the Commandment is kept faithfully, a deliverance from them. At the same time it asserts the relation between the highest human rest, the rest of the spirit in God, and the animal rest, that which every creature, according to its constitution, has need of. Each is secured; the Divine sanction is upon one as well as the other.

Again, I shall be told, "These are notions which you get from a certain kind of philosophy, and which then, by a strange anachronism, you impute to a particularly ignorant people, or some early legislator." And, again, I answer: I did not get these notions from philosophy; they are just what I have been unable to get from it. I find philosophers perceiving the endless vicissitudes of the universe, and trying to account for them. I find philosophers perceiving the fixed order of the universe, and trying to account for it. What I do not find is, the clear acknowledgment of each truth, and the reconciliation of the truths; or even the slightest attempt to bring either home to the apprehension of the man-servant and maid-servant, who have as much interest in them as the sage; the least attempt to associate practically the higher rest, which the man demands as a man, with the lower rest, which he demands in common with the other animals, though all language confesses that they have something in common. And, since later philosophers have not attained this wisdom, I do not impute to Moses or the Hebrews a premature philosophy, because an

institution of theirs embodied it. I accept their own statement, that they could not have devised such an institution, that it originated in the Commandment of a Lord God, who chose them, one of the dullest and feeblest of the nations, to teach the other nations concerning His relation to them and to the earth.

All that I read in the Gospels, of the way in which they construed this Commandment, not in the days of their ignorance or barbarism, but when they had synagogues in every city, when the law was read, and learned doctors expounded it, confirms me in this opinion. If I accept the Evangelists as faithful witnesses, if I accept any one of them as a faithful witness, the most religious men among the Jews, in the days when our Lord walked in Galilee and Judæa, actually inverted this Commandment, turning it from a blessing into a curse. They made it altogether another Commandment by their reading of it. There were not six days in which men were to work, because God worked and as He worked; there were six days in which they might follow their own inclinations and interests if they were masters, the inclinations and interests of their masters

if they were servants. There was not one day in which they were to rest because God rested; there was one day in which they were to pay a hard reluctant service to the most exacting of all Masters; to One who prohibited the enjoyment of His earth, as well as acts of healing, to His creatures as unholy acts, inconsistent with the homage to Him; to One who only tolerated such acts in rich men as were needful to the preservation of their property. Suppose Jesus did come on earth, as we say that He did, as He said that He did, to show forth His Father's Image, to do His Father's works, to bring men into His Father's rest, was it not inevitable that He should regard the Sabbath of the Pharisees with indignation and horror, that He should wage a deadly warfare against their conception of the Fourth Commandment, that He should restore the sense of it, "fulfilling," according to the maxim of the Sermon on the Mount, what they were destroying?

The thunders of Sinai sounded from Christ's lips against these transgressions of the Fourth Commandment in its letter and its spirit. Before I consider whether they are sounding

against *our* transgressions of it, I must encounter the charge that we have entirely departed from it by keeping the first day instead of the seventh; that this alteration makes our boast of submitting to it a mere pretence. This opinion, I need not say, is a very prevalent and a very plausible one. The cry sounds on all sides of us, "Change a law which you profess to consider a divine one, and then talk of being bound by it! How monstrous!"

So much turns upon this objection in respect to the nature, as well as the authority of this Commandment, and of all the Commandments, that I must devote a little time to the examination of it.

A change, it is assumed, was made by some particular Christian legislator, or a council of Christian legislators, in the day of worship. The first day, it was thought, would preserve the memory of our Lord's resurrection. *That*, it was decreed, should be the Sabbath of Christians. That any persons should have felt themselves competent to make this change in a law which they supposed to proceed from God Himself, must, indeed, make us wonder.

The inference is natural. They either did not think that it proceeded from God, or they supposed that it had no longer His sanction; the old arrangement was a merely local one; they might deal with it as they thought fit.

The first question one has to ask is this—When did this legislator, or this council of legislators, exist? What traces are there of them in history? Suppose we have a right to assume their existence without any documentary evidence, how did they establish their decree? How did they make it effectual over all the different Churches of the East and the West? We do know, on the clearest evidence, that an attempt was made in the earliest ages of the Church, when it was most alive to the sacredness of unity, when it was under persecution from the Roman world, to establish a common day for keeping Easter. We know that the attempt led in that time to a separation between the East and the West, and that the West rejected the day which there were plausible reasons for supposing that the latest Apostle had observed. Yet it is supposed that this far more important change, affecting all the daily relations and circum-

stances of life, took effect by the decree of some Apostle, or some ecclesiastical Synod, of which no record, no legend even, is preserved! Or, perhaps, a half-heathen, more than half-heathen, statute of Constantine about the *Dies Solis* accomplished what the legislators of the Church could not accomplish—succeeded not only in securing its adoption by Athanasians, Arians, Semi-Arians, whose controversies Constantine could never heal, but in securing the allegiance of all the barbarous tribes which accepted the Gospel under such various conditions in later times. Can any suppositions make greater demands on our credulity than these?

But still the facts remain to be accounted for; not one, but two. The first marvel is that the institution of a week of six days and one day should be adopted by the Greek and Latin Churches, not from any Greek or Roman precedent, but from the precedent of a race which they utterly abhorred, and held to be accursed. The second is, that, the Jewish institution continuing, there should be a change in the order of its days; the first assuming the dignity and sacredness

which had been given to the seventh. Explain these facts as you will, or as you can, they *are* facts, some of the most curious, if one reflects on them, which are to be found in any part of human history.

But they are often reported with singular carelessness. It is supposed that a certain day of *worship* was fixed for the Jews, and that Christian legislation substituted for it another day of *worship*. Is it not strange that the Fourth Commandment should say nothing about worship; that it should speak of rest and work—of God's rest and God's work—of man's rest and man's work—of the holiness of the Sabbath; but should never even hint at the seventh day being more a day of worship than the six days? Nor was there anything in the contemporary legislation to support the idea. There was morning and evening sacrifice in the Temple *every* day. When the synagogues were established, the Scribes may have found the Sabbath-day a convenient day for instructing the people in the Law. But the synagogues did not exist till after the captivity. They were valuable institutions, no doubt; they have no direct relation to

the Commandment: it does not provide for them.

Supposing, then, there were ever so many decrees, civil or ecclesiastical, fixing the Sunday for a day of worship, or assigning the kind of services to it which had been once performed in the Jewish synagogues; that would not in the least explain the history of the Christian week, or its relation to the Jewish week. These decrees about worship *presume* the change to have taken place—*presume* that, for some reason or other, by some influence or other, the first day has become the Sabbath, or resting-day; they do not make it such a day; *how* it became such a day we still have need to inquire.

If we start with a denial that God was the Author of these Commandments, or that He did give them to one nation, with the purpose of making it a blessing to all nations; if we assume that the meaning of these Commandments was not to be fulfilled—that no one was to come, in whom they should become a blessing to all nations—no one who should exhibit the perfect image of the God who rests and who works—no one who should make it

possible for man to rest as God rests, for man to work as God works; that is to say, if we assume Law and Gospel to be both equally a dream, the Jew and the Christian to be equally dupes of a cunningly-devised fable; I own myself unable to account either for the existence of the week at first, or for the change which has been effected in it among the nations which have confessed Jesus to be their Lord. I do not mean, even if I adopt this denial, to resort to shifts which seem to me utterly uncritical and unreasonable for the explanation of facts. I shall, in that case, hold my tongue. I shall say there is a mystery which baffles me; I must be content to let it alone. But if I do believe that God, and not man, is the Author of the week, and that the Fourth Commandment expresses exactly the meaning of it; if I do believe that Jesus Christ came to fulfil this Law, as well as the whole Law of God, to reveal God in His own Person, to unite God and man, to conquer the enemies of man; if I do adopt this amazing belief—which is, however, the belief that Christendom professes, apart from which it ceases to be Christendom;—then it seems to me that many parts of our

economy, which are ordinarily obscured, stand forth in remarkable clearness, and that the perplexities and anomalies of our practice become also very glaring, our abuses of the Sabbath being shown to be precisely of the same kind with those of the Jews,—more scandalous than theirs, because they are sins against the same institution in its most perfect and developed form.

If the six days spoke as the Commandment says they do, of the work of Creation, or the calling forth of *Life* in all things and in man; if the seventh day spoke of the Rest of God in the contemplation of this completed work; must not the question have occurred to those who kept the Sabbath, “What then of *Death*? Can God contemplate that, and say, It is good? Yet it has entered into His Creation. It has set its mark upon all these things. It claims man for its victim. What has become of the work, what has become of the rest?” We do not imagine this question. We know that the most enlightened Jews were tormented by it. We find it in their devotions. They could not find the answer to it. They waited for God to give the answer. If He did

rejoice in His works, if He wished His creatures to rejoice in them, He would give it. The Gospel of the Resurrection (I use Mr. Westcott's admirable substitute for the bald phrase, "Doctrine of the Resurrection") was this: "God *has* given the answer. He has declared death not to be the lord of man, or of the universe. He has declared One who has conquered death to be the Lord of it. In Him He rests. In Him you may rest." That Gospel means this, or means nothing. If it means less than this, let Renan, let Strauss, let all France, Germany, England, proclaim it to be a lie; let us confess that for eighteen centuries all the most civilized nations of the earth have been living upon a lie. But if it does mean this, the Sabbath could not be what the Commandment declares it to be, if it did not unfold itself—that is to say, if God did not unfold it—at the crisis of its fulfilment, to express that fulfilment.

Where else has it been expressed? Have the priests or doctors of any part of Christendom really taught the nations that the law of life is stronger than the law of death; that mankind has been brought by its

Head under that law of life? Is not our preaching altogether about the power of death; the feebleness of life? Who could gather from our language that the Resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith; that to bear witness of Christ's triumph to the world is our main function? Have we not led men to think that this Resurrection is to be accepted as the great anomaly of all, not as the fact which clears away anomalies, which restores order to the universe? The Christian Sabbath, penetrating into our common existence, laying the foundation of work in rest, bears that witness of the Resurrection as concerning all men, all creatures, which we have refused to bear. The priests and doctors of every nation have, indeed, tried to drag the Sunday down to their own level. Abroad, the day has been claimed merely as a Church festival, which the Church might treat according to its pleasure. At home, it has ceased to be regarded as a festival at all. It has become emphatically a day of unrest; a day which God is supposed to demand from men for His use, and from which they gladly escape to those six days which they may claim for

their own use. So has this institution suffered from the treatment of God's ministers. And yet our modern Reformers think they are maintaining a great principle, when they deny that it has any higher origin than the wisdom of these ministers. The old Reformation asserted for us a right to appeal from human traditions to God's Commandments. Their successors throw us back upon Romish or Presbyterian traditions, and the interpretations those traditions may receive from any given age. They complain of a Pharisaical Sabbath. They can only complain. They excite the fears of the best men, that in losing the perversions they shall lose that which has been perverted.

But when we go back to the terms of the Fourth Commandment, and accept our own Sabbath as the fulfilment of it, we have a protection against all Pharisaical interpretations of its meaning, against all attempts to enforce them upon the conscience of nations or of men. Not interfering with the habits of any land, or striving to fashion them according to our own, we can say to every land: "God, not man, has given you this day. God, not

man, is testifying to your people, high and low, that He has redeemed you in His Son from death, the grave, from all the enemies that would separate you from Him. He invites you, all of you, to rest in Him, your Creator and Deliverer. There is the rest for the spirit of man. And the body is to have its own rest; that it may labour more freely, more effectually, more nobly. To all sons of toil, to all who work with the hands, or with the brain, God holds out the same gift, grounded on the same Redemption. It is part of His charter of freedom to the nations; let the nation which aspires to be free, receive it at His hands." And what we would vindicate for other men, we must desire for ourselves. In the name of God's Commandment, in the power of Christ's Resurrection, we defy all attempts to turn that into an instrument of bondage which derives its sanction from the God who delivers out of bondage. We will worship on the Sabbath-day; but worship must mean entering into God's rest, or it is not true worship. We may listen to Christian teachings on the Sabbath-day; but if the preacher does not testify that Christ has risen

to justify mankind from sin, and death, and hell, his doctrine is not Christian, not Sabbatical. Against all restrictions which shall lead men to think that God intended the Sabbath as not a blessing but a torment to His creatures, we invoke the judgment of the Son of God, who, we believe, condemns us, as He condemned the Scribes of Jerusalem, for all outrages upon His Law; who, we believe, will prove that His Resurrection was no fable, and will bring rest and restoration to the earth which He has redeemed.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, the Deliverer out of the house of bondage, we bless Thee that Thou didst ordain the six days of work and the one day of rest as a perpetual token to Thy ancient people of the freedom which Thou hadst bestowed upon them; a perpetual sign between Thee and them of what Thou art, and of what Thou hadst created them to be. We bless Thee, O Lord, that Thou didst testify to them by the six days that Thy work is the

work of giving life, of forming creatures, whose life is perpetually renovating itself, and that Thy rest is the rest of rejoicing in that which is orderly and perfectly good. We bless Thee that Thou didst call Thy nation of Israel to enter into Thy rest and Thy work. And we bless Thee, O Lord, that in the fulness of the time Thou didst send Thy Son to take our nature, and to perfect Thy work. We bless Thee that Thou didst raise Him from the dead, testifying that Thou hadst not made all things in vain, that life is stronger than death, that mankind is justified in Him its righteous and living Head, that Thou dost still rejoice in Thy work, that men may enter fully into Thy rest. We bless Thee for our Resurrection Sabbath, which bears silent witness to rich and poor, to the learned and unlearned, of this redemption, of our right to draw nigh to Thee as our Father in Jesus, to rest in Thy love, and in Thy strength do the good works which Thy Spirit inspires. But, O God, we have not entered into Thy rest, or done Thy work. We have abused Thy Sabbaths. We have turned them into a bondage. We have not accepted them as the witnesses of the liberty wherewith

Thou hast made us free, of the glory of Thy creation, of the conquest over death which Thou hast obtained for it. Have mercy upon our nation, and upon all the nations which confess the Name of Thy Son, and profess to keep His day. Bring them, we beseech Thee, out of the dominion of men's traditions which enslave. Bring them under the power of Thy law of liberty. O break the yoke of the idleness which we have mistaken for rest; of the weary, fretting toil which we have mistaken for work. Fill us with longings for the eternal rest which is in Thee, for the perpetual work of doing Thy commandments, hearkening to the voice of Thy word. Fill us with the hope of the great day of redemption, when the heaven and earth which Thou hast created shall rejoice and sing together, as Thou hast promised. AMEN.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

ST. PAUL, writing to a Gentile Church, the most Gentile probably of all the Churches which he founded, speaks of this as the first Commandment with promise. That is to say, he not only accepts the commandment to honour parents as applicable to Gentiles, but he accepts the clause respecting the land which God gives as applicable to them. In our days the question is asked which was first asked by Heylin, the biographer of Laud, "How can the honour which we pay to parents have anything to do with this command, seeing that a promise is appended to it which points to Palestine, and only to Palestine?"

That question has taught me more respecting the meaning and truth of these Commandments, and respecting the cause of our growing contempt for them, than the most elaborate

discussions could have done. It shows me what is the suppressed premiss in the minds of those who suppose the Decalogue to be a Jewish code unfit for our country and our time. It is this: "No land of the modern world is a gift from the Lord God to those who occupy it in the same sense in which Palestine was a gift to the Jews." I do not say that this premiss is at all confined to those who speak slightly of the Commandments. Many of those who contend most vehemently for their paramount authority would be scandalized if any one said broadly, "I maintain that Great Britain is given to us just as Palestine was given to the Israelites; that we hold it of the same Lord on the same conditions." They would feel as if the exceptional miraculous character of the Old Testament narrative was invaded by such an opinion, as if it was in danger of being reduced to the level of common history. And yet, if this opinion is false, the Fifth Commandment has clearly no binding force upon us; the objection to it is conclusive.

I adhere to the maxims respecting this Commandment which I have maintained respecting

those which precede it. I hold that it was addressed by the living God to a particular nation, which He chose out of all nations, to be a witness of Him, a specimen of His ways and doings, and of His relation to every people under heaven. I cannot, therefore, shrink from the position which orthodox men seem to agree with liberal reformers in rejecting. I cannot allow any belief which I may entertain respecting the miraculous incidents of the Jewish history to interfere with my conviction that the principles of that history are unchangeable principles, that the code which embodies these principles is a code for all kindreds and peoples. In the light of those principles, as they are set forth here, I regard the honour of parents. The Bible says that the land of Palestine had been given by the Lord God to other races before it was given to the Jewish race, and that these races did not continue in it; they committed evils which made them a curse to the land and a curse to themselves. The Israelites were told that if they committed the like evils they should perish from off the good land to which they were going. Foremost among these evils, this com-

mandment places the loss of honour for the father and mother. "If you lose that," it says, "your case shall be like that of the people who will be driven out from before you. If you keep the honour of the father and mother, your days will be long upon that land." I think, as the prophet assures us, that the sentence was fulfilled strictly to the people of Israel. I think, also, that it has been fulfilled to every nation of the old and of the modern world; that God gave Persians, Greeks, and Romans their land, as He gave the Jews their land; that He has given Britons, Romans, Saxons, Normans, the land on which we dwell; that every race has holden it of Him under the tenure of honouring fathers and mothers; that the days of no race have been long on the land when the honour of fathers and mothers has ceased in that race; that the days of no race will be long in any land when the honour of fathers and mothers shall cease in that race.

I scarcely know whether these doctrines will be received as commonplaces too obvious to require any defence or illustration, or as paradoxes which no sane man would dream

of putting forward. Be they what they may, I not only adopt them but also this corollary from them, which to me at least sounds very terrible. Our domestic transgressions involve a coldness and indifference to our duties as citizens; our home life is confused and darkened by our want of zeal for the well-being of the nation. No one can really appreciate the fellowship of those evils in his age or country, however he may talk of them, till it has been brought home in some measure to himself; till he has learnt to abhor a number of religious subterfuges and equivocations, as well as worldly self-indulgences, which at different times have weakened for him the force and awfulness of the Fifth Commandment in its twofold aspect.

And then he will care that it should come forth to his countrymen and his generation, not as a pretty and useful maxim of ethics, not as a generalization from a long experience, but as a sentence proceeding from the mouth of the Most High; as a declaration from the Judge of the whole earth of His will concerning families and nations—how they sustain each other, how they must perish together.

Then he will feel that the enforcement of this declaration can be entrusted to no religious men or women, to no doctors of the law, to no priests. If he believes Jesus Christ to be his Lord and the Son of God—if he thinks that the Evangelists have not misrepresented the words which Jesus spoke upon earth—he must suppose that priests and doctors are specially disposed to substitute for *this* Commandment of God their traditions. Talk of the mild voice of Jesus being exchanged for the threatening of Sinai! Did not that mild voice echo all the thunders of Sinai? did it not direct them against the Holy City of David, not only when it spoke of the hypocrites who would pull the ox and the ass out of the pit on the Sabbath-day, and would leave the man in it, but even more when it laid bare the abominations of the Corban? “You pay money into the divine treasury, and so are excused from the obligation of obeying the divine command to honour fathers and mothers.” Was not the sentence, “Your days shall not be long in the land which the Lord your God has given you” (rendered by Him into these, “Your house shall be left unto you desolate”),

contained in that exposure? And has there been a country or a period in the history of the Church wherein doctors, casuists, priests, and preachers have not repeated the offence of the Corban—have not in Christ's name taught their disciples that the duty of giving money to some ecclesiastical treasury was greater than the duty of honouring fathers and mothers? This they have called loving Christ more than the father and the mother,—Christ, from whose lips those withering words in exaltation of the Fifth Commandment, in deprecation of the gifts, proceeded!

And how remarkably have these rebellions against the law by ecclesiastics borne witness to that connexion between the national and the domestic obligation which it enforces! In despising one, the sacerdotal temper has been forced to despise both. “What is there sacred in the land? You are to seek the kingdom of Heaven, a world beyond the grave. These home relations, this country which you talk so much of—do you not know that they are all to be taken from you? There is nothing lasting in them.” No, I answer. The land will not last if you are the masters of it. Then it will soon

perish away from us. But it has something that is lasting, something that is the witness of the Everlasting God, of Him who was, and is, and is to come, if it contains the tombs of the fathers and mothers who dwelt on the land before us. If we honour them, if we worship their God as our God, if we teach our children that He was their God and will be the God for all generations,—then the whole earth, and especially that portion of it which the Lord God has given us to keep, will be most dear in our eyes, as we believe it is in His eyes; then any attempt to disparage or degrade it will appear to us a flagrant sin and blasphemy against Him; then all efforts to purify and cultivate it, and make it a fit habitation for the ages to come, will be deemed a service acceptable to Him.

And so the message of our Lord concerning a Kingdom of Heaven may begin to be taken, not in twenty different senses but, in one simple honest sense. It will not be thrown into a vague imaginary future. It will make the future real by linking it to the present and the past. The honour of parents on earth will be sustained by the faith in a Father in

heaven. A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, instead of being a shadowy dream, will become continually dearer and more substantial from its association with the father's house in the land which God has given us. And every cotter and every town mechanic may learn that he, as much as the noble, has an ancestry; that the honour which he pays them gives him a place and right in the land. Then the rich will understand that the land has been given to the nation by God; that if they have purchased any portion of it with money, they still hold it of Him; hold it for the honour of their ancestors, for the benefit of their children's children,—therefore, for the good of the whole people. The more one studies the history of sacerdotal assumptions, the more one sees that, while they put scorn upon the earth and human relations, they bestow immense honour upon money. That becomes the great prize for the Church, that becomes an instrument for the remission of sins. Whereas God's law honours the earth, honours human relations, and by these breaks the yoke of Mammon, withdrawing men from that worship which is slavery and degradation.

PRAYER.

O God of our fathers, Lord God of Israel and of England, have mercy upon us. Thou hast given us the land on which we dwell, and we have called it our own, not confessed it to be Thine. We have not confessed that we are all citizens of the same land, bound to our forefathers, whose tombs are amongst us, bound to the children whom Thou wilt watch over as Thou hast watched over us. We have not revered our fathers and mothers as Thou hast bidden us reverence them. We have often fancied that we were honouring Thee in neglecting them. O God, for the sake of Thy dear Son, who hast taught us to call Thee Father, and has bound us together in one family, turn us from our evil ways. May Thy Spirit write this Commandment, that we should honour our fathers and mothers in our hearts. May He make this land very dear to us. May He make us ready to live and die that it may be a great and free land, worshipping Thee the true God, and not worshipping Mammon, the spirit of baseness and selfish-

ness. We know that if we serve him, we shall be indifferent to our fathers and mothers, and perish off the land. But O, reform us, and restore us, and fill us with fear of Thee and trust in Thee, that we may honour those who have testified, and do testify, to us of Thee, of Thy enduring law, of Thy everlasting love.
AMEN.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

IN speaking of the Third and Fourth Commandments I have rested much on the words of Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, "I come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." Those words introduce the passage in the Sermon which concerns the Sixth Commandment.

How, then, do our Lord's words respecting that Commandment fulfil it? There are two answers often given to this question. One is, that whereas the Commandment is merely a prohibition of a direct crime, addressed to wrong-doers, the Sermon on the Mount contains counsels of perfection for those who aim at a more elevated standard of morality. The other is, that our Lord adds to the terrors of the Commandment more tremendous warning respecting punishments in the future world. How plausible each of these state-

ments is, we perceive at once, when we read the passage :

“ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment : but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

There can be no doubt that the man who abstains from anger against his brother is more “ perfect ” than one who abstains from murder ; that may be called a counsel of perfection, which suggests the higher instead of the lower virtue. There can be no doubt, again, that the “ council ” and “ hell fire ” point to consequences more fearful than the mere “ judgment ” which is associated with a breach of the Commandment. But how does it happen that these terrible warnings refer not to the crime which the Commandment denounces, but to those evils of which the man who is aiming at the high standard is conscious ; those evils to which every one of us is prone ? I omit other

reasons which have often been urged against the notion that the Sermon on the Mount is laying down the maxims of a special and refined morality. I omit the obvious remark, that it is throughout a denunciation of the religious sect which was standing apart from the crowd and cultivating an exclusive righteousness, that it is throughout an announcement of the Kingdom of Heaven as meant for those who refuse to be above their fellows,—for the poor in spirit, for those who hunger after a righteousness which they do not find in themselves. I rest only on the evidence which this particular passage affords. It is surely a levelling one. “*Whosoever* is angry with his brother, is in danger of the judgment: *who-soever* says, Thou fool, is in danger of hell fire.” There is no encouragement here to any who fancy that they are unlike the offenders of whom the Commandment speaks. There is everything to suggest the thought: “In thee, O man, who seemest most safe from the temptation to commit murder, are the roots of murder. Oh, bethink thee well of these roots! Consider how they may be extirpated! For the judgment upon that

which thou mayst *do*, will not be so dreadful as the judgment upon that which thou *art*, upon thy own very self."

Here I find the fulfilment of the Commandment. It comes forth, as every Commandment comes, in the name of the Lord God of Israel, the Deliverer out of the house of bondage. It is addressed, as every Commandment is, to the conscience of the whole nation, to the conscience of each individual member of the nation. There lies its power—there is its thunder. It is backed by no threats of punishment. There will be a judgment appointed by the land for the trial of all offences against the Law. Whether that judgment is a righteous one will depend upon the righteousness of those who conduct it; their righteousness or unrighteousness may affect mightily the conscience and well-being of the nation, its faith in a higher and more perfect Judge. But the Law itself does not speak of any contrivances for the discovery or the punishment of the criminal. It stands forth in its stern simplicity. It carries home to the man a witness of a Righteousness which he cannot set aside, though he may defy it,—

which will assert itself against him, and against all men.

Those who set up their judgment-seats for the trial of murder—those who devise punishments, capital or other, for the murderer—think that in these arrangements of theirs lies the efficacy of the Commandment. They suppose that the threats which are addressed to the brute in the man—to that which answers only to threats—are the real, nay, the only deterrents from crime. They do not perceive that such threats presume the existence of an imagination, of a foresight, in the person to whom they appeal; which qualities are not brutal, but human. They beg help from that which they refuse to acknowledge. The man wants their threats, wants that protection against his lower nature. But he wants much more; he wants that message to *him*, that acknowledgment of him, as the subject of an unseen Lawgiver and Judge, which is contained in the Commandment. Rob him of that, and all the most ingenious devices which a *Théorie des Peines et des Récompenses* can suggest are fruitless. They seem to be complete in themselves; in fact,

their influence comes from that older legislation which they suppose that theirs has superseded.

The Jews, in the days when our Lord dwelt on earth, though without a *Théorie des Peines et des Récompenses*, had no faith in anything but punishments and rewards. Their judgments, they supposed, were the only securities against the murderer. Very ineffectual securities they were, if we may trust the Jewish historian of that age; very ineffectual to prevent the murders which arose from the plots of the religious sects against each other. And now He speaks, who speaks with authority, of a judgment, a sure and clear judgment, not only against the murderer, but against him who is angry with his brother without a cause. To him the Judge, who says, "Thou shalt do no murder," is speaking. Alone, in the deep caverns of his heart, he may hear the Voice of the All-Righteous saying to him, "Thou art wrong; thou art separating thyself from Me. I discern that rising fury, though none other can." Will he heed that Voice? will he turn to the Reprover? or will he utter the "Raca" against the brother which the Reprover would

restrain him from uttering? Then the Voice will sound louder: "The council of the holy and righteous is passing sentence upon thee. Thou art cutting thyself from their company." Will he despise that Voice, too? Shall anger turn to contempt? Will he treat his brother with "Thou fool?" O fool thyself! How little thou knowest the depth of thy madness! A fire is burning within thee which thou canst not quench! It will consume thee, body and soul, if another fire—God's fire, the fire which comes with His Spirit—does not enter it; if that does not burn up the offal which is in thee, that thou mayest be made a true vessel, fit for the Master's use, fit to be the dwelling-place of His charity.

Yes! thus, even thus, does He who is the Regenerator of humanity, He who comes to baptize with the Spirit, fulfil the old Commandment, depriving it of none of its old significance, putting nothing in the place of it, but affirming that the tree must be made good if the fruit is to be good; that the man must encounter the murderous spirit in the depth of his own being, if he would not be his tool and victim in acts of crime.

Such service I believe the Commandment may do for the nations now, if they will not substitute for it the casuistry of priests, the schemes of jurists, the motives of sentimental moralists. When a people like the Italians are awakened to feel that they are a people, how fearful must seem to them all those webs of sophistry which have been woven by a priestly government about this crime of murder; the indulgencies, the endless confusion between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction which have made the trade of the assassin so successful a one; the more than justifications which has been offered for such acts when they have been done for a holy cause. How eager they must be to sweep all these webs aside, and to accept any suggestions of modern experience (their own country has supplied some of the most remarkable) for making judgment-seats fair and punishments equitable. A nation cannot live or breathe till it has got something of evenness and simplicity into these, till it has judges who are not respecters of persons, who care nothing for rich or poor, for priest or layman, who care only to assert right and put down wrong. But that it may have such

judges, that it may condemn the guilty and clear the innocent, there must be that belief in a perfectly just Judge, a Judge who sees into the heart of things as of men, which the priests have obscured and practically set at nought. The people must hear that Judge speaking to them one and all directly, in their own consciences, not through the muttered bewildering tones of those who profess to be the interpreters of His will. Once again let the old Commandment sound in their ears, let them feel that it is fresh and young for them, awful and mysterious just because there are in it no mystifications.

Here, in England, we have been blessed, and are blessed, with honest judges; we have, to a great extent, cleared away the duplicity which arises from the attempts of ecclesiastics to intrude upon the functions of the civil tribunal. For these gifts we cannot be too thankful. But the dangers are great which accompany them. We suppose that we have a set of punishments tolerably well contrived, but still imperfect, for hindering murders; their weakness must be eked out by the threat of punishments greater and more enduring

hereafter. These are used as a machinery for producing obedience to the law; they evidently do not produce obedience to it. But that hell, which the judge, as much as the council, has need to remember; the hell of anger and contempt within; the moral death of the man: that is lost sight of; the real hell has been changed for a hell of the fancy. Then moralists cry out, with just indignation, that there can be no actual virtue and vice, whilst we are merely occupied with the advantages of one and the disadvantages of the other. They assert that there is a sense of right and wrong in all men; they erect an ethical system upon that sense. If there is such a sense—and I think the universe must go to pieces at once if there is not—who imparted it? Who speaks to it? Did the system create it? Does the system speak to it? Or did the Lord God create it? Does He speak to it? That is what I mean when I say, “The Commandment is above all the contrivances, threats, dogmas of Priests, Jurists, Moralists. *The Priest, the Jurist, the Moralist* came not to destroy, but to fulfil it.”

PRAYER.

O Lord God, we bless Thee that Thou carest for the life of every one of Thy creatures whom Thou hast made in Thine image. We bless Thee that Thou hast bound together nations in awe of Thy Commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder." We bless Thee that Thine Eye pursues him who has shed his brother's blood, that Thou bringest him to judgment, if no man knows what he has done. We bless Thee for all righteous judges whom Thou hast established in our land or in any land, to bear witness for Thy everlasting Law. We bless Thee that Thou dost not only pronounce Thy sentence upon acts of murder, but that Thou hast declared war by the voice of Thy Son against all the tempers and habits of mind which lead to murder. We bless Thee that He has told us that anger with our brother exposes us to Thy Judgment, and that if anger and contempt possess us, there is a Hell within us, from which we cannot be delivered unless we turn to Thee, and yield ourselves to Thy

Holy Spirit. We bless Thee, O God, that in Thy New Covenant Thou promisest the continued presence of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may be made right and loving men, and so may be kept from cruel and murderous deeds. But we have not honoured Thy holy Commandment. We have thought that by our punishments and our threats we could drive murder out of our land. Thou knowest how, in spite of our punishments and our threats, dark murders, the murders of children by their parents, of wives by their husbands, are committed among us. The land is defiled by this blood, and yet we do not count it the curse and misery of our nation; we do not confess it to Thee as the fruit of the evil passions which we have allowed to grow up in our hearts. And in many lands, where men are sealed with the seal of Thy Covenant, and profess to worship Thee, Thy priests have led murderers to think that they may escape Thy Justice, and that they may have indulgence for their crimes through the intercession of earthly mediators, instead of that deliverance from the sin of their hearts, which Thou hast promised in Thy Son. O Lord God, let the nations once more hear

Thy voice, which is speaking to them now as in the days of old. Let them submit to Thy unchangeable Law, that they may know the blessing of Thy everlasting Gospel, and may feel that they are bound to each other as the brothers of Christ, and as Thy children in Him. So shall they worship Thee the God of Life, through Him who gave His Life for all. AMEN.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

THOSE who think that the command to honour fathers and mothers has lost all direct application to us, because it is connected with continuance on the land which the Lord God had given the Israelites, may also suppose that the Seventh Commandment had a chiefly local meaning, because the prophets lament the adulteries of the Israelites as a main cause of their approaching captivity; and because continual allusions occur to adultery as the sin of the nation itself, as well as of its individual members. Such passages undoubtedly sound very unreal to the majority of Englishmen, when they are said to concern England; divines who see in them only "types" of what has happened or is happening or will happen in the Church, or who only "improve" them to our use, increase the sense of their unreality. "The Israelites," we are often told, "lived

under a peculiar dispensation. Crimes which we denounce as leading to future misery brought on them temporal punishments; they were subjects of a Theocracy. So departure from the service of the unseen God, and the adoption of idol worship, might for them be aptly compared to the revolt of a wife from her husband." With phrases such as these, repeated by one person after another, never sifted or winnowed to see how much there is in them of wheat, how much of mere chaff, we cheat ourselves and our flocks, and keep up in them and in our own minds the opinion that the Bible is a very divine and wonderful book, and that its words may signify anything or nothing.

If it is meant that the prophets told men who had given up their hearts to their corn and their wine—who had become sottish and brutal through self-indulgence—that the corn would fail to grow, that the vines would languish, that the earth would be dried up, the assertion is no doubt true. How such sentences point to any peculiarity in their dispensation I am at a loss to perceive. When such habits become the habits of a nation,

there will be that indifference to the care of the land, that slavish expectation of supplies to come without energy and effort, that dependence upon chance, from which these calamities proceed; the truth is not less applicable to modern Egypt or modern England than to the Holy Land. The only question is, whether these things happen because there is an everlasting and unchangeable Ruler of the nations and of the earth, because His laws are violated and revenge themselves; or whether they happen through the interference of some capricious gods—call them by what names you please—who disturb the order of things to avenge some offence to their priests or themselves. The latter is the heathen solution of this difficulty; the former is that of the Jewish law and prophets.

But when we turn to such a crime as adultery, the phrase “temporal punishment,” even in this sense, becomes not merely inadequate to express the warnings of the Hebrew books, but it is, in some respects, the most unsuitable that could be found. Do you call it a temporal punishment that a people loses all sense of its relation to the

permanent and the eternal? But it is exactly this which the prophets foretell, when they use that language which seems to you so strange and mystical about the land of Israel breaking loose from Jehovah, its true Lord and Husband, and going after visible lovers. And this they treat as both cause and effect of a habit of indifference to the marriage bond. "The neighing after the neighbour's wife," appeared to Jeremiah the inevitable accompaniment of the nation's pursuit of idols "upon every high hill, and under every green tree." When the habit of forgetting the unseen Lord prevailed, the habit of forgetting the unseen ties which bind the wife to her husband would prevail; fleshly instincts would become supreme. This doctrine was not Semitic in this sense, that there was any liking for it in the Jewish mind. The prophets were as much scorned for their mystical notion that domestic life had anything to do with national life—or that God cared for either—in the East as they would have been in the West. "Doth he not speak parables?" was the habitual taunt there as here. The only question in this case as in every other is,

Were the prophets or the scorers right, right for that country and time, and for all countries and times? Was the parable true, or a lie for that country and time, and for all countries and times? Or, to put the question a little differently, Will there ever be a free nation where the sanctity of the marriage-bed is not honoured? Will the sanctity of the marriage-bed be ever honoured in a nation which is subject to an arbitrary government, which does not confess a God of Righteousness, which does not trust in Him as a Deliverer? Can the nation shake off the yoke of arbitrary power, in whatever form it may be afflicting them, if they do not believe that the God of Righteousness, the Deliverer out of bondage, is sending forth His everlasting decree against adultery?

It is easy to evade these inquiries by grand phrases about Semitic or Judaical habits of thought, but such phrases do not help us to interpret the actual records of mankind. They do not show why the consciences of men have, in legends of no Semitic origin, traced a connexion between the tyranny over states and the pollution of household sanctity, have hailed the husbands and wives who have been true to

each other as the restorers of freedom. They do not show why the annalists of Rome and the satirists of Rome associated the decay of all sense of national dignity with the decay of domestic purity. They do not show how it came to pass that the Gothic tribes, subverting that old civilization, were able to establish a new order in Europe founded on reverence for the original law : “ God made them male and female.” They do not show why the Popes, while they upheld the sanctity of the marriage vow against monarchs who were setting it at nought, could appeal to the conscience of the nations, and obtain reverence as the ministers of God ; why there was a sense in men’s minds of a truth in the assertion that marriage was a divine sacrament ; why the Popes lost all reverence, and roused the conscience of the nations against them, when they taught that marriage was not holy for priests ; why it was felt that by this doctrine they established priests into a tyrannical caste, separated from the nation, presenting no example of morality to it, interfering with its civil order. These phrases about Semitic modes of thought do not show why our an-

cestors turned to the Jewish Commandments and the Jewish history as witnesses for the domestic law, and for the national law, against those who were undermining both. These phrases do not explain why, when Italy was sinking into moral corruption and political slavery, under the joint influence of the patrons of Art and the priests of Religion, Savonarola found in the words of the Law and the Prophets the protests against both. They do not explain why a Dominican monk, who had so earnest a hatred of corruption and oppression in priests as well as kings, could not effectually deliver his people from oppression or corruption, because he could bear no witness for the honour of marriage. These phrases do not show why, in the German and English Reformations, the old Jewish idea of the sacrament between God and the nation brought with it the acknowledgment of marriage as a divine ordinance of God which it was the great function and honour of the priest to ratify, but which derived its sanctity from another than him. These phrases do not make it less true, that men in the sixteenth century spoke of England in the very language which

the prophets applied to Judæa, as having revolted from her true Husband through lust for visible things and earthly gods, as being sought by Him in all her wanderings, as being led back by punishment and suffering to her allegiance. These phrases do not explain why the great Bourbon, whom France reveres as her liberal and gallant monarch, did by his gallantries undermine the effect of his many genial qualities, lost his own sense of truth and weakened the sense of truth in his people, prepared the way for the still grander monarch who said, "*L'état!—c'est moi!*" who filled the land with the fruits of his profligacy, at the same time that he was destroying all the traces of its liberty. These phrases do not explain how perfectly compatible this profligacy and this invasion of old order were with the religion which Louis learnt from his confessors; that they were only incompatible with the belief in an everlasting God, who from age to age says, "I bring nations out of bondage, Thou shalt not commit adultery." These phrases do not explain the history of the Voltairian liberalism of the next century, how mighty it was to expose rottenness, to pull down houses built

upon the sand, how impotent it was to restore law or freedom to any people. These phrases do not make us understand the powerlessness of the ablest and most far-seeing man in the National Assembly to raise up any edifice in place of that which he was helping to throw down, or to preserve anything which he desired to preserve. These phrases do not help us to explain the fact that the cleverest discourses of the cleverest doctrinaires of France have not been able to deliver it in former days or now from an imperial *régime*, or from the domination of priests, even when that *régime* and they have seemed most hostile to each other. Nor do these phrases give us much help in weighing the hopes and fears of the newly risen Italy, in judging whether her freedom will be such as her best patriots would wish for her, or such as some may wish for her who accept Julius Cæsar as the model of a popular leader, and who affirm (I trust falsely) that he was not only the libertine we know him to have been, but that he made deliberate use of his libertinism for his political purposes.*

* I need not remind any reader that this charge is brought against the great Roman by the patron of Italy, who is also the

Once more, I must say it very solemnly, such phrases do not make the revelations of our Divorce Courts more tolerable, do not give us the least assurance that the abysses of family corruption which they open to us are not also abysses of national debasement, from which no boasts of commercial prosperity or of high civilization will avail to raise us.

To me it seems that no better message can reach us, or any nation, than that the Lord God is the enemy of our adulteries, national and domestic, and is willing to deliver us from both. I cannot help the message being Semitic, or Judaical. I believe we shall all perish if we do not hear it, and heed it. I cannot find that the priests or the philosophers of any nation have provided a substitute for it. All they can either of them do is to warn us of certain consequences which will

eldest son of the Church, not at all *as* a charge ; rather as a lively illustration of the character and designs of the hero, who is exhibited to us as the prototype of the first Napoleon, and of other democratic leaders that have been slandered as foes of liberty. The apology that Cæsar was a heathen must appear ridiculous to every schoolboy. Are there no heathen protests against invasions of female purity of a much less aggravated kind than this ? What are the best legends of the Republic but protests against them ?

follow from the transgression to the individuals who commit it. There are consequences undoubtedly following from it which are most grave and terrible to them. But the sense of them is most alive when it is least wanted; in moments of fierce passion it vanishes—often vanishes soonest from those who are least debased.

And if it is said that they may, by degrees, by a long course of discipline, be trained to a foresight of these consequences, let it be remembered how many ingenious men and women have been at work in all days—are specially industrious in ours—to dispute a number of these consequences, to draw the most delicate distinctions, which prove certain adulteries to be, on the whole, rather innocent than guilty, rather commendable than blameable. Let it be remembered how little mere dry ethical disquisitions, be they ever so sound, can prevail against arguments of this kind, presented in the form of some popular story, exhibiting very often real acquaintance with subtle processes of the heart, striking at many conventional reasonings on behalf of virtue, which the conscience acknowledges to be

worthless, mixing many plausible, and some honest, religious sentiments with apologies for departure from virtue. Here is a discipline to prepare a man or a woman for the actual hour of temptation! What armour of foresight have you in store to counteract it?

“The fear of hell.” Let me apply to this subject the remark which I made under the last head. It is not in the Commandment against adultery that we meet with any allusion to punishment, present or future. But when we turn to the Sermon on the Mount, we find it written—

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members

should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

Here we have the casting into hell. *Here* we have warnings that anything should be given up, rather than that we should incur that horror. And, again, we are not left to guess about the horror. The impure act springs from a state of impurity. To be in that state—shut up in it—is the hell which we have to dread, to avoid which we are willingly to part with the right eye or the right hand.

Is there anything new in this way of considering these words? Is it not the old doctrine, that to be in hell is to be in the company of unclean spirits, to be their subjects? That old doctrine—it seems to me the true one—we have exchanged, to our infinite loss, for the notion of a hell which God of His arbitrary pleasure designs for those who commit certain acts, a hell which we fashion out of our own imagination, in hopes that the imagination of other men will recognise it, and that it will keep them at least from flagrant enormities. The more we heap up the possible penalties of body and soul, the

more incredible they become; the man says, "These cannot be for me." He calls to his recollection what he has been told of God's mercy, to assure him that they cannot. Whereas, if he were directed to Christ's own words—to His teaching about hell—he would say, "Yes, that hell is real, is true. I have suffered from it. I am suffering from it. O Lord God of mercy and goodness, wilt not Thou raise me out of it? Wilt not Thou save me from the presence and despotism of these unclean spirits? Wilt not Thou teach me to cut off the right hand, to put out the right eye, which gives them a power over me? Wilt not Thou claim me as Thine?" Then he will understand that Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven was the answer to this cry. Then he will perceive that to be possessed by His holy and loving Spirit is indeed to be in the heavenly state, as to be possessed by a foul spirit is to be in the hellish state.

This, like the other, may be Judaical language. I find it sound and true; therefore I use it. I believe that England will cease to be a nation if it loses its old faith in a Father in heaven who is a Deliverer, if it confounds

Him with the destroyer. I believe no nation can recover its rights as a nation till it utterly abjures and abhors the notion of God as a destroyer ; till it turns to God as the Deliverer from all the sins which have brought and are bringing desolation upon it. Priests, Philosophers, Conservatives, Liberals, call yourselves what you will, if you do not teach us that lesson, you will not help the nations to rise ; they will fall, and you will fall with them.

PRAYER.

O holy and everlasting God, we bless Thee that Thou hast established the holy bond of marriage among the nations of men. We bless Thee that Thou hast sent forth Thy Commandment against all who break that bond. We bless Thee that Thou makest nations to live by the keeping of this Commandment, and that they wither and perish when they fall into contempt of it. Have mercy upon us, for we have made light of it in this land. It is defiled by its adulteries, and we have not felt that they are bringing a curse

upon us all. We grieve when Thou takest from us our outward prosperity, but we do not grieve for the loss of our heart and manliness, and of our trust in Thee. Renew these in us, whatever becomes of Thy gifts of corn and wine. Teach us to fear Thy Holy Name, that we being true to Thee, the Lord and Husband of the whole land, the husbands and wives in it may be true to each other. Almighty Father, Thy Son has taught that it is damnation to be impure in heart and spirit, and that to be made pure and to be filled with Thy holiness and love is the great salvation. Help us, we beseech Thee, to hate evil more than all punishments. Help us to cleave to Thee as the God of all goodness, who sendest punishments that Thou mayest bring us out of evil. O God, give us repentance, and Thy gracious Spirit, that we may be true witnesses of Thee. We ask all things in Thy Son's Name. AMEN.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

La Propriété c'est le vol, is that dogma of M. Proudhon which terrified all sober and quiet people in the Revolution of 1848. Why were they terrified? I think because they were conscious that they had been claiming for property a position which it can never maintain, from which it may be shaken by any convulsion. They had assumed individual property to be the basis of a nation; again, they had affirmed that the chief use of a nation is to uphold property. Which is the tortoise, which is the elephant? Conservatives and Liberals were equally puzzled to determine; the former seemed to think that there was a something called Religion which clothed Property with a mysterious, unapproachable sanctity.

In any great crisis this divinity will be rudely examined; the question will be asked,

Is this the Lord God, who has created the universe, and whom you worship? Proudhon may have been an Atheist; he may have believed that there is no Lord God of nations. But his wild maxim may have forced some to consider what was the plank which separated *them* from Atheism; whether a belief in property was the plank; whether, in that case, they were not distinctly renouncing the Lord God of the New as well as of the Old Testament.

If, on the other hand, we believe in that Lord God, if we confess that the nation rests on His righteous and eternal Name—that it has no standing-ground but that: property will be regarded as one of the institutes of the nation, subordinate to many others—to the order of the week, to the honour of parents, to the sacredness of life, to the sanctity of marriage; but still as holy, established by the Most High, sustained by a Commandment. If the owners of property will recognise that tenure of it, and what that tenure involves, they come under the protection of this Law. Then the nation, so long as it is a nation, instead of treating property

as robbery, will treat every invasion of property as robbery—will guarantee to each man that which he has inherited or purchased : because it is jealous of common rights, and will not suffer them to be touched, it will be jealous of individual rights, and will not suffer them to be touched. If those who have property choose another god, let them invoke his protection in their time of need ; let them cry to their companies to deliver them. That cry we may hear ascending loudly enough in our day ; whether there is any that regardeth or answereth, is another question.

The command, *Thou shalt not steal*, taken in its simplest sense, without the least paraphrase or attempt to give it an unnatural extension, presumes the existence of a nation—presumes a Divine King watching over the nation, and over that which is in the hands of each of its members. The prophets never deemed that the Commandment was only to keep the poor man's hands from meddling with the treasures of his richer neighbours, though they counted it a blessing to him and to all others that he should be kept from meddling with those treasures. But Ahab the

king robbing Naboth of his vineyard, even insisting that he should part with it for a price or for a fair equivalent, was, in their judgment, trampling upon the Commandment. The eye of the Lord God was upon him; he would be forced to make restitution in land or in life. That is an instance how little they tied the Commandment to the regulations which might be desirable for making it effectual at any given time against the thief of some movable article. Statutes against thefts were framed for the land of Israel. Obedience to such statutes was a national obligation; the name of the Lord God of Israel was the sanction of them as much as of any grander and more universal principle. But particular statutes of this or any kind were not necessarily, as the prophet Ezekiel intimated, good in themselves; they might be good only in adaptation to a peculiar state of circumstances—good on account of “the hardness of heart,” which called them forth. They had the stamp of time, and place, and accident upon them; it belonged to their very nature. The meaning of the enactment was not recognised, if that stamp was obliterated, and a

more permanent one substituted for it. Here was a Commandment which no punishment devised by any man or body of men for the infraction of it, could enhance or exhaust. It was in the Divine keeping. It applied to the ruler as well as his subjects; it would be enforced against both.

And surely it has been so in the latest, as in the earliest times. The thunders have sounded against robbery as against murder; have sounded in the consciences of men, in the conscience of nations, because the command which they ratified has been felt to be God's command not by reason of the outward terrors which have sustained it. These terrors to the flesh or evil nature have been necessary; no sage man or nation would dispense with them; the sagest men and nations have considered how they might be shaped so as least to interfere with the effect of the higher law on the man himself. For it has been found that in various ways the local laws which define what crimes shall fall under the definition of stealing, or what punishments shall be awarded to those crimes, may interfere perilously with that Commandment which

lies beneath them, and from which they derive their efficiency. So long as forest laws or game laws exist, the Name of the Lord will be a sanction for them to him who reverences the Commandment, if he dislikes them ever so much. But he *will* dislike them for this reason especially—that they bewilder the conscience respecting the weight and authority of the Eighth Commandment; that they provoke all kinds of casuistry respecting the limits within which it may be observed or disobeyed; that they do very often touch that point where the claims of property become robbery; where the individual privilege invades the common justice of the nation. All Robin Hood legends and the sympathy which they have awakened in a people suggest this moral. It does not become obsolete in post-feudal times; it can never be pondered too earnestly by holders of property and by legislators in all times.

In connexion with this subject we ought to consider the so-called Communism of the early Christian Church. Does it interfere with the respect for property which the national commandment inculcates? Here, as elsewhere, I believe, we have the fulfilment of the Com-

mandment, not the destruction of it. The members of the early Church, filled with the spirit of fellowship and unity, manifested that spirit in not saying that anything which they had was their own, in selling their lands, in distributing to those who had need. They entered into the very meaning of the Sermon on the Mount. From him that would borrow of them they turned not away; just as in their persecutions, "from him who took away their goods they asked them not again." They were at that time all Israelites, and they vindicated the true brotherhood of Israelites; they bore witness against the exclusiveness, spiritual and material, of the Pharisees. But that exclusiveness made property odious; provoked the wish to invade it. Those who showed that there was a principle deeper than the regard for property, that men who possessed it could part with it for a higher end, raised the poor man to a level which enabled him to regard the possessions of the rich without grudging, suggested to the rich the purpose for which he was entrusted with more goods than his neighbours and why the law secured them to him.

The community of goods was never ordained by the Apostles; the impulse seems to have been discouraged by them after the abuse of it by Ananias and Sapphira. There is no allusion to it in the Epistles to the Gentile Churches; nay, there is positive evidence that it did not exist in those Churches. The story of the first days after the Pentecost remains as a record—a quite invaluable record—of the principles which must inspire a Church, so far as it is a Church; a record showing that a Church has no power to originate a law, or to dispense with a national law; that it mistakes its calling, and denies its proper glory, when it aspires to any, the least, competition with a nation.

What has been the effect of the attempts in the Church to interfere with the ordinary arrangements respecting property, to establish orders in which property shall be unknown? The story of the Franciscan disputes in the fourteenth century is a complete answer—one which, if it needed repetition, has been repeated to satiety. The renunciation of property leads to bitter quarrels about the possible limits within which it may be lawfully held,

to endless equivocations about the property of the individual and the property of the body. And these are not the worst scandals of Church history in respect to this Commandment. The robbery for burnt-offerings which the old prophets denounced, has in every age awakened the indignation of the laity; has stirred up a selfishness and cunning in the holders of land or goods, which they can always justify by the rival selfishness and cunning of the ecclesiastics; who plead the honour of God for their exactions and subterfuges. A Church which acknowledges that the honour of God is involved in the keeping of His Commandments; and that, before these Commandments all traditions of men must fall, will uphold the institution of property by the zeal with which it bears witness that property exists for the sake of great common interests, and must perish if it is exalted above them.

PRAYER.

O Lord our God, we have revered our property more than we have revered Thee. We have believed that our nation rests upon

the security of property, and not upon Thee. We have sacrificed the common interest to our private interests. And so the poor have been tempted to break thy Commandment against robbery. And the rich have robbed the poor of that which was the inheritance of their fathers. And our lives are passed in struggling how much we can win from one another, and defend against one another. We have by our selfishness weakened the belief in Thy law. We have punished our people for crimes which we have made, and so have led them to doubt what are or are not crimes in Thy sight. Have mercy upon us all. Have mercy upon Thy priests, who in a multitude of ways have confused the consciences of men respecting this Commandment, who have not shown them how Thy Divine Spirit blesses all property by teaching the owners of it that they hold it as in trust from Thee, for Thy children. Oh, give us all a new heart. Mould us after the image of Thy Son, that we may count it more blessed to give than to receive. So will our nation hear Thy Commandment and keep it, and Thou wilt bless us, and the land will give her increase, and our barns will be full of stores,

our oxen will be strong to labour, and there will be no complaining in our streets. O teach poor and rich, that a man is not happy for the multitude of the things which he possesses, but that a people is happy which has God for its Lord. We ask all blessings in the name of Jesus Christ Thy Son. AMEN.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

THOUGH we are wont to speak of the second Table of the Law as setting forth our duty to our neighbour, it is only into the last two Commandments that the word *neighbour* enters.

When our Lord said that the first Commandment was, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and the second, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, He did not introduce an artificial division into the Decalogue. He adopted the terms in Deuteronomy to explain the whole of it.

Since the Commandments are addressed to Israel as a nation, and to each Israelite, the idea of neighbourhood is involved in them all. Since the Commandments come forth from God to the nation, and to each Israelite, allegiance to Him—that allegiance which is not slavish, but the loving allegiance to a deliverer

—must be implied in every act of obedience to them.

I believe this observation is necessary, because we are very apt to suppose that murder, adultery, theft, are crimes chiefly against the man who is murdered, the man whose bed is polluted, the man from whom any goods are stolen. Whereas the Jews believed, and we Englishmen till of late always believed, that they are crimes against the nation; that the nation suffers an injury which no satisfaction to the individual sufferer, or to those who represent him, can repair. Nor is the case changed when the word is introduced which occurs in the Ninth Commandment. The false witness must be against some person, some fellow-citizen. But here, as everywhere, the wrong done to him is done to the community. Israel is injured, if a particular Israelite is slandered.

That kind of false witness which takes the form of perjury, which breaks the sanctity of the oath, has already come before us in the Third Commandment. It is included, no doubt, in this. But false witness is no more limited by it than murder, adultery, theft is limited

to the cases in which it becomes open and notorious. The prohibition goes forth in the name of the Lord, the King of the nation, against that which destroys the order and existence of the nation. The covert crime—that which shrinks from the light, that which is transacted in whispers—is more deadly than any which the earthly legislator or judge can take account of. *The* Legislator and Judge knows it. His thunders say to the man, “Thou shalt not do it.” “But yet,” some one will say, “it is done.” Certainly, the Commandment against bearing false witness is disobeyed, as every other Commandment is disobeyed. It speaks to the conscience of a voluntary creature. As a Commandment, it exercises *no* force, except over the conscience; whatever other influence deters a man from a crime is external to the Commandment.

I make this remark again, though it has no more application to the Ninth Commandment than to any other, because experience suggests this thought to us all.

“It is possible to define murder, adultery, robbery; you can assign to them such penalties as you think desirable. But is it pos-

sible to define false witness? The laws in every country must take cognizance of slander and defamation. They mean, of course, to check falsehood. But they do often punish truth. The paradox, 'The greater the truth the greater the libel,' may be now banished from our Courts; but there was an excuse for it in the inability of the Court to judge of the offence, except by the amount of injury which it did to the person who suffered from it." This remark being undoubtedly true, I draw attention to the fact that this Commandment makes the essence of the crime consist, not in the injury that it does to any one, but simply in its falseness. That is the wrong to the nation: that wrong is discovered by the God of Truth; to that the conscience of the man is privy.

But the Commandment is obsolete! It applied only to the Jews! The ethics of civilized society have discovered a provision against this crime, which the old vulgar legislation of Sinai could not dream of! Do we in England dare to say this? Was the "School for Scandal" produced in an age of barbarism? Does it represent the habits of an unrefined

class? Is not the modern press a creation of modern civilization? Has it discovered the secret of stopping false witness against the neighbour? Outward persecutions are impossible to a great extent for Protestant theologians. Have they learnt that it is a sin,—do they not often count it a duty,—to bear false witness against each other? Where are the ethics of fashion, of public opinion, of the religious world, which have devised securities against this evil, which have prevented it from becoming a cancer in the body politic? Woe to us if we are left to the decrees of civilization to extirpate it; let that civilization call itself Christian or anti-Christian, let it express itself in saloons or lecture-rooms or pulpits. Till the voice of God is heard once again speaking without respect of persons against every kind of false witness,—till we feel that He who uttered that voice is the Judge of the whole earth, and will cut through every web of sophistry and casuistry, which we have woven to hide ourselves from His sight,—we shall go on each in his own way, under his own pretext, adding something to the lies which are circulating through the land,

and which are working, as surely as murder or adultery, for the dissolution of it.

Oh, is it the time to tell us that the nations do not want this Commandment? Ought we not rather to say to every nation that is struggling into birth: "This prohibition is just what you *do* want, just what the tyrants who have kept you down have not suffered you to hear. Believe it, there is no sin like lying; all sins are included in *that*. Priests have taught that, for certain high and holy ends, lying is lawful, is excusable. You cannot answer them; I cannot. But the Lord God can. If He is not the God of truth, there is no God; we have been worshipping a phantom. If He is the God of truth, then He maintains an eternal warfare against falsehood in every nation, in every man. Leave the sophists to argue out cases, through volumes upon volumes if they like. What signify their volumes to you and me? God speaks. God will search out your lies and mine. God will destroy them. Oh let us long that He should! He can give us no greater blessing than that."

"But yet holy men do feel that their duty to God involves what seems rather like in-

justice to their neighbour." . Certainly they do. St. James told us so long ago. "Therewith," he says—with the same tongue—"bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made in the similitude of God." That was the practice of religious men in his days. It seemed to the Apostle a huge contradiction. Is it so or not? And is he right, when he goes on to use that language which sounds at first so hopeless? "The tongue is an unruly evil; the tongue can no man tame." Yes! it seems to me that my own conscience, and the experience of our times, fully bear out his assertion.

If it were not so, what means this tendency to slander in myself, what means this atmosphere of slander in which we grow up? The child's tongue begins to lisp slanders; the tongue of the clever schoolboy utters them more skilfully; the delicate young lady practises them as an art; literature adopts them into itself as a principal part of its attraction, as one of its great instruments for refining manners. Surely the tongue can no man, no society of men, tame, although it be such a deadly poison, although it is working such desperate mischief.

What, then, am I to do? The old Commandment throws me upon the promise of the New Covenant. God forbids us to bear false witness against our neighbour. He says that He will bestow on us His Spirit of Truth and Charity. It is a promise to a society. It is a promise to each member of a society. Is it a delusion? If we may not believe that God is saying to each of us, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour;" if we may not believe that He will give us the strength we need to obey His Commandments—we shall find that there is another spirit at work among us—a spirit of lies—a spirit which no arts of civilization, no arguments or threats of religion can exorcise—a spirit of which they may become the agents and ministers,—a spirit the purpose and function of which is to rend families, commonwealths, and Churches asunder.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, we bless Thee that Thou hast bestowed on us the wonderful gift of speech, that we may hold fellowship with each other,

and may show forth that divine Word in whose image Thou hast created us. We bless Thee that Thou hast endued us in this land with a noble and beautiful language, which binds us to our fathers, and in which wise men have spoken and sung to us of justice, and mercy, and truth. O God, we have abused this precious treasure to the vilest purposes. We have made it an instrument for uttering falsehoods against each other. We have come before Thee with words of praise and adoration, and we have applied those same words to the slander of those whom Thou hast redeemed by the blood which has redeemed us. We are all guilty before Thee; the richest and the poorest, the most enlightened and the most ignorant, young and old, women and men. But specially those who preach the faith of Thy Son to us have borne false witness against each other, and have excused their lies as being lies for Thee. O Lord God, suffer not the nation which Thou hast loved and watched over to perish through the cruelty and malice of us who dwell in it; give us that hearty and inward repentance which Thou only canst give, that when Thy Son shall sift us and all

nations, and separate the wheat from the chaff, we may be a holy and acceptable people in Thy sight. As Thou didst send Thy Spirit at first to prepare Thy disciples, and that they might prepare their countrymen, for the great and terrible day of the Lord, which was coming upon them, and to form a Church of loving men, true to each other, bearing witness of Thy truth ; so now, O Lord, purify and renew the Church of this land with Thy Spirit, that it may hate all lies, and may prepare us for that day when every secret slander and lie will be exposed by Thy light. Oh, let us not tremble at the thought of that day, but long for it, and wait for it as indeed the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon the earth. May He arise now in our hearts, and scatter all the darkness which is in them, that they may be filled with Thy brightness and glory. AMEN.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

IT was this Commandment, St. Paul tells us, which utterly crushed him. He might have thought, as the young ruler thought, that he had kept the others from his youth up. It was shown to him, very clearly, that he had not kept this. Nay, he was shown something else, which was utterly bewildering. The Commandment produced the very state of mind which it denounced. "It wrought in me," he says, "all manner of concupiscence."

There is no experience more important than this for the understanding of St. Paul's history, or the history of the Christian Church. Out of it came the discovery to him of the meaning of the Gospel which he accepted for himself, and which he preached to the nations. All that he says about the impotence of the law,

about the curse of the law, is interpreted by it. An experience in its essentials similar to this was passed through by Luther. Out of it came his discovery of the Gospel which was accepted by him and which he preached to his nation. Out of it came the protest of the sixteenth century, and all its mighty effects upon national as well as personal life. It must concern us greatly, therefore, to consider what this experience meant, and what was the deliverance from it. Does it bind us, if we maintain the liberty of the Gospel, to cast aside the Commandments as obsolete and dead? Are those who treat them as obsolete and dead of the same mind with St. Paul and with Luther? Are the effects of their teaching likely to be such an emancipation of the nations as proceeded from the teaching of the Apostle and the Reformer?

Saul of Tarsus felt that it was his calling and work to defend the law of the Lord God of Israel against the Nazarenes, who were, as he thought, subverting it, who were breaking down secretly, if not openly and formally, the distinction between Jew and Gentile. He entered upon this task manfully. In the course

of it that strange discovery was made to him, “Thou, too, O child of Abraham, Hebrew of the Hebrews, art condemned by the very law of which thou art the champion. The law says, ‘*Thou shalt not covet.*’ Does it say that to the Gentile or to thee? Is the law for the Gentile, or for thee, a member of the race to whom it was given? And thou *dost* covet. Thou art continually coveting. Thou dost not covet less since thou hast heard the law. The law has brought thy covetousness to light.”

“Is it possible? Does the Lord God of Israel then utter His tremendous sentence against me? How can I avoid this sentence? If I exhibit this zeal against the Nazarenes—if I practise all the services which the strictest of our sects prescribes—will that set me free from it? No; it dogs me everywhere. Not some other law, but *this* law, this which I esteem so divine. There it is. I cannot erase this Commandment against coveting from the tables of stone. And, while it remains there, it bears witness, not only against certain acts of mine, but against a state of mind into which I am habitually falling. Yes; and a state of mind which the very effort to avert

the punishment of the Commandment—that death which is implied in the violation of it—strengthens and deepens. The more I struggle, the more covetous I become. That habit which comes forth to some men in a simple desire for the ox or the ass seems, in me, concentrated. It fills my whole being. It is my religion. In all my thoughts about the future or the present, I am covetous. I am never so covetous, so wrapped in self, as when I am plotting how I can be saved from the judgment of God against me.”

And yet how strange! The conscience which torments him for this breach of the law approves it, admires it. He confesses that it is holy, just, and true. He is powerless to obey it, but there is a consent in his mind to its perfect rectitude. He might wish at times to blot it out of the Bible. But he does not really wish it. He knows it is impossible. And suppose it was possible—supposing covetousness were to be permitted, sanctioned in him and in all Israelites—would that be a blessed state of things? Would it not be precisely the most accursed state of things possible? Could there be a nation of Israel if it existed?

Would not each man be plotting to destroy the nation, to get everything from his neighbour which the law of the nation vindicated for his neighbour?

Clearly this was a contradiction, the most radical of all contradictions. He is not able to get rid of by shutting his eyes to it, or by determining that it is a problem past his solution. The problem is in himself; he must have a solution of it, he cannot live as an Israelite unless he finds one. And yet what can it be? Is not covetousness his nature, his own self? How can it die, unless he dies?

How could there be this war in the very heart of man with himself? How could there be this war with the Lord God of his fathers? There was the same answer to both questions. One was revealed to him, the Lord of him, the Lord of those whom he was persecuting. Against Him he was fighting. Saul was selling himself to the covetousness with which this Lord was engaged in eternal war. For He was without covetousness. He had come to give Himself up for men as His brethren. That mind in Saul which confessed the law to

be holy, and just, and good, turned to this Lord, trusted in Him; by that trust rose out of the covetous nature which had kept it in bondage, could treat this nature as a cursed thing, an enemy. But not till the same mind had confessed his Lord to be the Lord of all men, of Gentiles as well as Jews, not till he had felt that he had a right to say to every man, "Thou mayst count thyself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ thy Lord."

Another discovery could not be separated from this. The Lord of men was the Son of God. He who offered Himself as the Sacrifice for men was the perfect Image of His Father. He had come to do the will of His Father in that sacrifice. He had come to give men the Spirit, in which He had made this sacrifice that they might not be the slaves of their covetous nature, that they might obey the true law which they were created in Christ Jesus to obey.

Thus, then, it had come to pass, that Saul, being at war with himself, was also at war with the God who gave the Commandment. HE was the uncovetous Being; the Being

who had sworn to put down covetousness as the foe of His own Nature; as the foe of the creatures whom He had made in His image. Saul, like the heathens, had been clothing this Being with his own attributes, had been imputing to Him his own selfishness. Now he could proclaim His true Name. He could baptize all nations, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He could say to all, "God in Christ has reconciled you to Himself. The sacrifice of Christ shows you what He is. The sacrifice tells you what is the true law of your being, what you are made to be."

At every step in the proclamation of this Gospel, he had to encounter the opposition of those who thought that they were defending the law. What he was really encountering was the spirit of covetousness, which was making them rebels against the law. They could not believe in a Christ who sacrificed Himself; they would not believe in a God who had created the universe in His infinite charity, who had redeemed the universe from its death and curse out of the same infinite charity.

The Baptism of the nations set forth this God to the nations. The Baptism of the nations adopted them into this Name. The Father of Him in whom all things were created, by whom all things consisted, was their Father. The Son was the Head of the society, the Lord of each man. In Him they were members of a universal family. The Spirit, in whom the Father and the Son were eternally one, drew them into the confession of this fellowship. The Christian name, the name which denoted the adoption into this divine Name, was the familiar name, that which each parent used in speaking to his child,—the distinctive name, yet, in the widest sense of all, the family name. With Baptism was joined the Eucharist. That went into all lands, testifying of a Sacrifice once made for all, for which all were to give thanks, testifying that all were bound together under the law of Sacrifice—the law of His being, who is the Head of every man—and that each man might overcome that covetousness which severs man from man, which is the destroyer of nations.

For centuries that Baptism and that Eucha-

rist had been established among the nations of Europe. They marked out the nations for a Christendom. In the city of Rome dwelt a man, who was called the Father of this Christendom, the Vicar of Christ, the Uniter of the nations. From this man went forth the offer to the people of Europe of remission of sins to be sold for a price, the money to be used for the building of a church—the church of the sacred city—in which the free Sacrifice of Christ for the world should be daily celebrated. To Leo, the patron of the Arts, the member of a family which had destroyed the liberty of his native city, the liveliest of jokers, the most subtle of intriguers, this seemed as reasonable a way of raising funds for a church as any other. The clever scholars of the time smiled at a practice with which they were already familiar; practical people thought it might do the boors good to be told that they must pay something for escape from hell and admission into heaven; religious people said that religion would be endangered if any decree of the supreme father were set at nought. To one man it was not a jest, but an abomination and a blasphemy. He had been born among

boors ; he had become a scholar ; especially he had studied in the school where Saul of Tarsus had studied. The covetousness of his own heart had been revealed to him by the God who condemns covetousness. He had found that for boors and scholars there is a deliverance from covetousness, a union with God in Him who gave Himself up for the world. The covetousness of a Church which was the witness for this Sacrifice utterly appalled him. Could it mean anything but this, that the Church was denying Christ, was selling itself to His enemy ? He appealed to the old testimonies. He conjured men to believe that Baptism and the Eucharist were not lying speeches, not inventions of men, but authentic declarations concerning God and their relation to Him ; His messages from generation to generation. It was a time of great kings, of wonderful politicians. And this voice, coming from a monk knowing only the cloister and the college, produced such a national movement as all the kings, and all the politicians, and all the priests could not quell. For men knew in their inmost hearts that covetousness was eating up Christendom, that the kings

were enslaved to it, that the priests were cherishing it under divine titles; that no maxims of ethics, no ridicule of wits, no insurrection of peasants could put it down. Only in the Name of the Lord God could it be encountered; only He could raise His Church out of the pit which His ministers had dug for it.

And now we who live three centuries after the Reformation, in a country which accepted it,—we who still conjure with the names of St. Paul and Luther—are utterly unable to cast out this spirit of covetousness from our land or from our hearts; it leaps on us, and overcomes us. For we, using the watchwords of St. Paul and Luther, have inverted their sense. We recognise covetousness as the law of the universe; we try to persuade men that sacrifice is not the law of it,—only a special law for some few who have confessed Christ's name; nay, not even for those, but for those who have accepted a "scheme of salvation" which is laid down in books of divinity. The Sacrifice of the Son of God has dwindled into that! It is made dependent upon our conception of it or belief in it! And what belief

in it can there be, when we are no more encouraged to believe in Him as the Head of every man, when we are taught to think of Him as a Redeemer out of His Father's hands, not as One who has come from the Father to redeem us out of the power of the spirit of covetousness, to make us sons of God and heirs of the eternal life of righteousness and charity? So all the dark thoughts about sacrifice which the Reformation sought to cure appear again in their old malignity. As much in Protestant as in Romish countries, men and women devise self-willed sacrifices, which may commend them to God, and deliver their consciences from a burden. The secret that the self-will is itself the burden, that that is separating us from each other and from God, that it must be taken away before we can offer ourselves, and all our energies of mind and body, as sacrifices to God, dawns upon us at times; but how the burden can be thrown off, how the free heart can be won—this we are not told, or told in language the most perplexing and contradictory. Nay, English divines are inviting us to put on the old fetters, to accept spiritual directors in place of the divine

Teacher, to deny that there is any divine Teacher, except He comes to us through them ; to regard the priest as making that Sacrifice, for which he is permitted, in the name of the congregation, to give thanks. Not a few would persuade us that, if we will put on these fetters thankfully, and wear them gracefully, we shall recover our unity with the nations from which we have been separated.

We do, indeed, want that unity. All hearts ought to cry for it. But it must come by no renunciation of any truths which our fathers asserted for us—by no effort that any mere customs which we have inherited from our fathers should be adopted by foreign lands. It must come from the acknowledgment that the old Commandments which we had from the beginning are still for old and young, for every country, and every age ; that none speaks so clearly and so loudly against us, and against the corrupt tendencies of every nation and every Church, as this concerning covetousness. It must come from the belief that all the nations of Christendom have been claimed as inheritors of God's New Covenant ; that they are all sealed as His children, and

baptized into His Spirit; that they are witnesses of this adoption to the nations which are still ignorant of the Name of Christ, especially the witnesses of Him, by showing that they are not tied to the law of covetousness, that they can obey the law of charity.

This unity of the nations must come from the belief that the Holy Communion, the celebration of the Sacrifice, which binds heaven and earth together, is not a delusion; that it does reveal to us the true character and purpose of our Father in heaven; that it is established in Christ for all mankind; that the Holy Spirit is able to write the law of Christ on the hearts of human beings.

I rejoice, therefore, that the Commandments are linked in our English Service to the Service of Communion. I rejoice that we are all put on the same level by that treatment. There is no fine morality for fine and spiritual people. There is no coarse and vulgar morality for coarse and vulgar and irreligious people. All are regarded as being liable to commit the crimes which the law prohibits. Each of us is regarded as suffering from these crimes whether he commits them or no, seeing that

he is a member of the body in which they are committed. All are assured that they are under the government of the God of nations; included in the same redemption; educated by the same Spirit of truth and unity. In losing the Commandments to the nations, I believe we lose the Gospel to mankind. If the one is changeable, the other will become more changeable. If we do not believe the Lord God proclaimed Himself to the Israelites as a Deliverer out of the house of bondage, the New Testament will become to Christians a house of bondage. If we no longer hear the voice of the Lord, saying, "Thou shalt not covet," we shall turn the news of Christ's Sacrifice into an excuse for the most profound and hopeless covetousness.

PRAYER.

O God, who art the infinite Charity, who hast constituted us under Thy Law of Charity; who hast sent Thy Son to fulfil Thy Law, by giving Himself for the world; who hast sent Thy Spirit of Love to mould us in Thy Like-

ness, and to deliver us from our enemies; have mercy upon us. Break the yoke of our covetousness, which sets us at war with Thee. Show the nations that the spirit of selfishness is not supreme. Raise them up to worship Thee, the only true God. Then we believe and know that Thou wilt fulfil Thy blessed Covenant, and write Thy Law of Love in our hearts, and deliver us from all the curses into which our disobedience has brought us. Then, O Father, who dwellest with the Son in the Unity of the Holy Spirit, the one God of Charity, shall Thy Church give glory to Thy Name. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. AMEN.

THE END.



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